

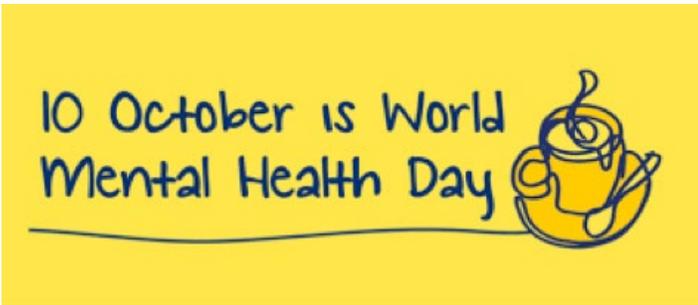
Francesca McCrossan, President

October 2019

President's Message

Dear St. Andrew's Society,

As you know from my previous writings, I usually concentrate on Scottish and Scottish American culture and the arts. This month, I am focusing on a slightly different aspect of our community and culture; its ability to positively affect our mental well-being. October is Mental Health Awareness Month and October 10 was World Mental Health Day. Mental health



is a serious issue, and it's easy to feel compassion fatigue when we are inundated with examples of how our system fails the vulnerable and mentally ill. So, I'd like to put that compassion fatigue aside and focus on how being part of a cultural community like the St. Andrew's Society has a positive impact on my mental well-being.

My parents taught me that being a part of a community was one of our family's most important values, and there are lots of reasons for this. First, there is the sense of pleasure and security I have gained over the years through being a part of our community. I've written about this before, but when I realized that I had become an important part of the Society, but also an active and recognized part of the Scottish community in the Bay Area, it gave me a much-needed sense of being a part of something larger than the sum of its individuals. The shared experience of living in Scotland, the common reference points of jokes and sayings, the friendships I have made and the good work I have been able to do would not be possible without being a part of our community.

The arts and culture that are a regular part of our community bring me great pleasure and satisfaction. Every month I get to hear live bagpipe music. There are at least 10 festive events every year that bring even more Scottish culture, music and dance into my life. Think about our upcoming **Banquet and Ball**. I am guessing that we have the only holiday party in the city where a full Pipe Band plays for at least 20 minutes and supports the highland dancers we are lucky enough to watch. The Peninsula Scottish Fiddlers, many of whom are members of the Society, play for us at the Firehouse, the Banquet and Ball and the Burns Supper. Enjoying this live music and dance would bring me joy just of itself, but because it is connected to our community, it has an even greater positive effect in my life.

The importance of community, culture and the arts on mental well-being isn't lost on the Scots across the Pond either. In researching mental health in Scotland, I came across the

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President's Message

Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival. It began in 2007, and in 2020 will take place in venues across Scotland from May 4th to the 24th. The object is to de-stigmatize mental health issues, allowing people to heal, and find resources and help where



most often they suffer in silence because they are too scared, or depressed, or without the resources to manage things for themselves. The Festival includes everything from music, film and visual art to theater, dance and literature. One of the things that caught my attention on their website is their description of how the arts positively affect people's well-being. They write, "By engaging with artists, connecting with communities and forming collaborations, we celebrate the artistic achievements of people with experience of mental health issues, exploring the relationship between creativity and the mind, and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing."

Art and culture together strengthen both the community and the individual. Communities, like the St. Andrew's Society, help sustain Scottish arts and culture. This becomes a virtuous circle that our community and every individual in it benefit from. So, every time you come to a meeting, dance at a Ceilidh, sip a whisky or enjoy the words of our Bard, remember, you're strengthening your community, and your individual well-being!



Warmly,

Francesca M. McCrossan

President, St. Andrew's Society of San Francisco

2019 Lawn Bowling National Championships, Golden Gate Park. Sept. 24–27.



Photos courtesy of David Campbell.



Scotland's Best Buildings



The Macallan Distillery's undulating roof has been planted with native grasses and wildflowers.

Every year the [Royal Incorporation for Architects](#) in Scotland chooses the nation's best new building. But this year especially, the decision won't be an easy one. Among the finalists for the prestigious 2019 award, drawn from 82 entries across the country, are four works of arresting and alluring design that have attracted worldwide attention. Judges called Dundee's stunning new V&A museum "an example of the highest level of architectural ingenuity...simultaneously stimulating, engaging and intriguing visitors." Another finalist, the £140-million Macallan Distillery and Visitor Centre near Craigellachie, was called an ingenious fusion of architecture, whiskey technology and impactful interior settings. Also among the finalists are two older buildings that have been given a new life: Edinburgh's Collective Gallery and restaurant (housed in the city's former observatory complex, a neoclassical gem built in 1818) and the newly restored Charles Rennie Mackintosh-designed Willow Tea Rooms in Glasgow, built in 1903, which was judge "immaculate and captivating." The winner will be announced later in the year.

This article was first published in the Autumn 2019 edition of Scottish Life magazine.

Local Hero Village Says "No" To Digital

The quaint [Aberdeenshire village of Pennan](#), made famous by the classic 1983 movie *Local Hero*, remains a tourist destination for the film's many fans. The movie's iconic red phone box is still on the main street, protected by a historic building designation, and the main street is still a picture of quiet solitude. But residents were worried that a proposed cell phone tower would ruin the landscape that has captivated so many, so, despite the approval of the tower by the Aberdeenshire Council, local councillors moved to defer a final decision until more study could be undertaken. For now, Pennan remains quiet.



This article was first published in the Autumn 2019 edition of Scottish Life magazine.

The Loch Lomond Mail Boat

By Kevin Pilley

The Macfarlanes' fleet of antique cruisers flying Royal Mail pennants aren't exactly excursion boats, but you're welcome to tag along.

Tonto, Roy Rogers and The Prince of Wales are all on Sandy Macfarlane's post round.

Eight times a month in the winter and 12 times a month in the summer, he casts off from the Balmaha Boatyard on the southeast shore of Loch Lomond to deliver the mail to the islands and islanders of Britain's largest expanse of inland water. His post round is 23 miles long by five miles wide. And about 600 feet deep.

Three generations of Macfarlanes have been authorized to carry the Royal Mail on the loch. The contract has stayed in the same family since it was first awarded to Sandy's father and grandfather in 1948. "I don't know who will take it over from me as I have four daughters," Sandy wonders.

"Nothing much has changed over the years. We deliver on Monday and Thursday in winter and on Saturday as well between May and October. We still have the same three boats and we still have a Border collie. He's called Kip. We had three Sallies before him. That's the only thing I have changed—the name of the dog."

In the summer, Royal Mail pennants flying, two boats are used for the mail run—the 36-foot Marion, built in 1938 and named after Sandy's grandfather's niece, and the 31-foot Margaret, built in 1947 and named after his grandmother. In winter, he uses the tiny Lady Jean, named after the former Duchess of Montrose. She was the Macfarlanes' first boat, built in St. Monance in Fife on the east coast of Scotland in 1936 and still going strong.

The mail boat also takes passengers in the summer, charging a very reasonable £7 (about \$9.10) for a three-hour trip at a maximum speed of eight knots. Adds Sandy: "It can take longer when I am on my own, depending on what hospitality I receive and who's about and wants a chat.



The Marion piles the water of Loch Lomond, her Royal Mail pennant flapping in the breeze.

Photo © Cljyn Satterley

"The islanders have their own boats now. But in the old days, residents of the islands who wanted to get to the shops in Drymen down the loch wanted us to time the postal deliveries to coincide with the bus comings and goings, and that was sometimes quite erratic."

There are 38 islands inside the loch by some counts. "It depends on what you call an island," says Sandy. "Some are just swirling weeds, floating islands or underwater hazards. Prince of Wales island is just a blip on the loch floor and is submerged most of the time. It is named after the paddle steamer that struck it in the 1950s."

Inchmurrin, at over a mile long, is the largest of the loch's "inches." or islands (from the Gaelic *innis*). It is also the liveliest, thanks to a delightful restaurant and bar that are open every day from 11 a.m. on. I glanced at the bar menu and it is equal to anything on the mainland, featuring such staples as haggis and black pudding, battered haddock and salmon, with local ice cream and cheeses rounding things out.

The inn is now tended by the third generation of Scotts. It was built by Tom Scott with his wife Anne. Tom, who grew up on Inchmurrin, was a Highland games champion and a famous fisherman. A record 48.5-pound salmon he hooked in the River Tay is displayed in the bar. Inchmurrin is also the only island with visitor accommodations—five self-catering cottages also built by Tom.

The island was bought in 1940 by Tom's father, a sheep farmer from Girvan in Ayrshire, but no one can remember the price. "They gave places like this away in those days," I'm told.

When Tom died, his sons and daughters-in-law took over a spread that included 39 cattle, two tractors, a horse called Tonto, enough pheasants to have an organized shoot and a Labrador.

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Mail Boat

After mooring *Lady Jean* and stowing Kip below deck, Sandy picks up a small roll of letters and a larger roll of kilt material and walks up the jetty to one of the four permanent homes on the island.



The *Lady Jean*, named after the former Duchess of Montrose, hard at work in the 1960s.

“The arrival of the mail boat was a social occasion,” says Anne. “I can remember Sandy’s dad always had a bottle of whisky and used to pass out the drams. He never gave me one!”

Before Sandy could take the helm, he had to pass his Captain’s Certificate, which included radio, first aid and lifesaving. “They’re serious tests,” Sandy assured me. “The days when a couple of drams of malt would get you past have long gone,” he jokes. “Passenger safety’s our first concern.”



At 36 feet, the *Marion*, built in 1938 is the largest of the Loch Lomond fleet.

Photo © Clive Satterley

Sandy has another memory of the old days. In 1963 the loch froze over completely. “My father and grandfather walked across the ice eight miles here and back to deliver the mail,” he says. “My grandmother was livid when she found out!”

During the same winter, Tom Scott dragged the first pink bath across the ice to the island. Electricity was installed in the 1940s and in 1961 the hotel was built. “When we have weddings, most brides arrive soaked to skin in spindrift!” says Tom. The island’s other permanent resident is a former bank manager, Michael O’Ians.

Mary, Queen of Scots is reputed to have stayed at the Lennox Castle on Inchmurrin. The island also had a government-run

distillery in the 18th century. One tenant used to pay the landlords in wax at Christmas for his rent. In the early part of the 20th century, Inchmurrin was stocked with game and used as a shooting lodge by the Duke of Montrose.

But perhaps the most surprising thing about this remote outpost are residents of another sort. For the last 80 years or so, the Scottish Outdoor Club has made Inchmurrin its home as well. “Naturists are perhaps the most unusual thing I deliver,” says Sandy with a smile. But, the Scottish weather and midges often do not cooperate, and it is rumoured that sometimes the nudists are forced to reluctantly cover up.

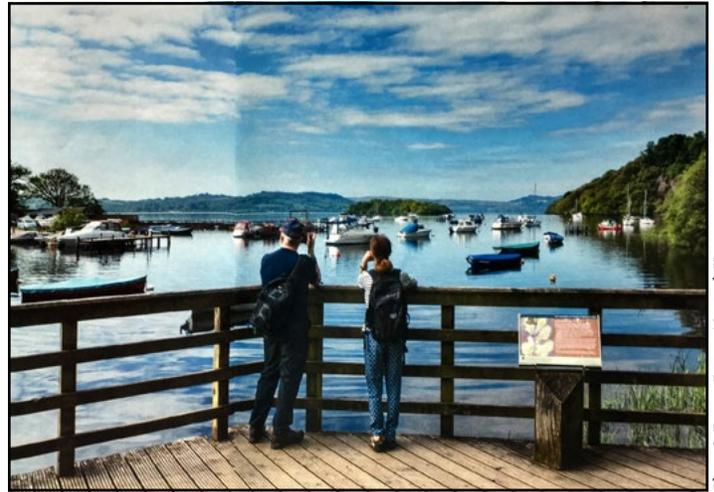


Photo © Dennis Barnes / Scottish Viewpoint

Tourists at Balmaha look across Loch Lomond to Inchailloch.

Macfarlane and Son occasionally make deliveries to Ardlui and Inverarman at the head of the loch. But the next stop today was Inchtavanach, leased by a fireman known locally as Roy Rogers. If Sandy is to be believed, Roy wears cowboy clothes, swims horses over from Luss and rides them western style. Sadly, he was not in. Neither was the seasonal resident of Inchconnachan island.



“The water can rise by 11 feet between low and high water,” explains Sandy. “But don’t ask me why. If we knew, we wouldn’t have an excuse for our monthly Erosion Study Group meeting in the pub!”

Loch Lomond, created 100,000 years ago by the Highland Boundary Line, a massive geographical fault separating the Highlands from the Lowlands, was the home of the infamous outlaw Rob Roy Macgregor. At the northern end of the village of

Balmaha, the road down which Rob Roy MacGregor used to bring his rustled cattle to market rises abruptly and steeply up the Pass of Balmaha, a short, narrow, twisting gorge. This is the

Mail Boat, continued on page 6

Mail Boat

point at which the Lowlands give way to the Highlands.

The mail boat passes the shingly beaches of the exclusive Loch Lomond Golf Club. The next port of call is Inchfad, which is the home of the Woods brothers, Derek and Michael. An accountant and artist from Nottingham, they are the only Englishmen living on Loch Lomond.



Photo © Glyn Satterley

The Loch Lomond post boat waits at Inchmurrin pier while the mail is being delivered.

As the rain begins to fall, Sandy tells me the run has been cancelled only once in summer because of weather, adding that the worst weather he's ever been out in was a force 8 gale with 40-mile-per-hour winds.



Photo courtesy seelochlomond.co.uk

Tourists settle on board the Margaret at the Balmaha Boatyard.

The final stop is at Inchcailloch ("island of old women"). It used to be the site of a nunnery and is now a nature reserve and the home of its warden. There are three walking routes here, marked out to guide visitors through the woodlands, and the island is quiet except for bird-song.

Back at Balmaha, the mist is coming down. Sandy pats Kip and looks back at the loch. "We are very lucky. Ours is a unique rural business and lifestyle. It must be one of the most beautiful post rounds in the world."

Kevin Pilley has been called Britain's most published travel writer, with his work appearing worldwide. He is a graduate of St. Andrews University and now lives in Wales.

This article was first published in the Autumn 2019 edition of Scottish Life magazine.



How well do you know Scotland?

A monthly quiz brought to you by *Jek Cunningham, Bard.*

Questions

1. What is a Gean?

2. What is the Lilyoak?

3. What are Witches Thimbles?

4. What are Mappie's mous (Rabbit Month)?

5. Where is the tomb of Robert the Bruce?

6. Where is the Queen Mother's summer home?

7. What was the Queen Mother's maiden name?

8. How long was Mary Queen of Scots reign?

9. How long was she a prisoner?

10. When was the last coronation held in Scotland?

Answers can be found on page 9.

The Saint Andrew's Society of San Francisco
Cordially invites you to join us in celebrating its
156th Annual Banquet and Ball

Saturday, December 7, 2019

Where:

Marines Memorial Club
609 Sutter Street at Mason
San Francisco CA 94102

Evening Events:

Hosted Cocktail Reception: 6:00 P.M.

Dinner, Evening Program & Ceilidh: 7:00–11:00 P.M.
Peninsula Scottish Fiddlers, The Prince Charles Pipe Band
and Highland Dancers

Formal or Highland Dress Recommended

Tickets:

Members: \$100 per person

Non-Members: \$125 per person

Tables of 10: \$1000

Buy tickets online at: (**EventBrite**)



Robert Burns
(1759–1796)

*The St. Andrew's Society
of San Francisco*

Burns Supper

Saturday, February 1, 2020

Save the date for the annual commemoration of the anniversary of the birth of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns with a traditional Burns Night Supper.

at

Marines Memorial Club
609 Sutter Street (at Mason), San Francisco, CA 94102

Celebrations start at 7:00 PM

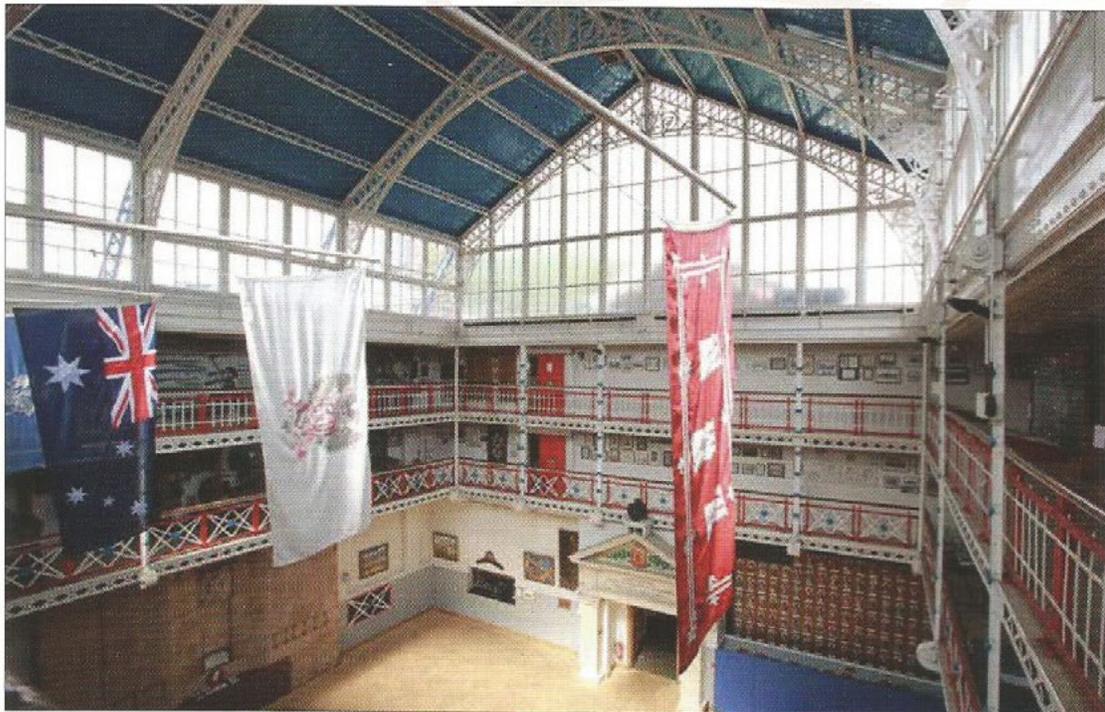
Formal Attire

For enquiries contact Irené Waldman Costello (2nd VP) at:
irenewaldman@yahoo.com

Tickets will be available soon through the Society's website,
saintandrewssociety.org, beginning in December.

[Click here for additional event information.](#)

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Robert Louis Stevenson Museum

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P: 707-963-3757

info@stevensonmuseum.org
stevensonmuseum.org

Quiz Answers

1. A wild cherry
2. Lilac
3. Foxgloves
4. Antirrhinum
5. Dunfermline Abby
6. The Castle May
7. Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon
8. Seven years
9. Seventeen years
10. 1651, Charles II

Meeting & Events Schedule

Date	Event / Topic	Location / Notes
2019		
Mon. Oct. 21	Member Meeting (Candlelight Dinner).....	1088 Green St., SF
Sun. Nov. 10	Remembrance Day Service.....	Grace Cathedral, SF
Mon. Nov. 18	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Sat. Dec. 7	156th Annual St. Andrew's Banquet & Ball	Marines' Club, SF
Mon. Dec. 16	No Meeting due to December 31st. Hogmanay Celebration	
Tues. Dec. 31	Hogmanay Celebration	1088 Green St., SF
2020		
Mon. Jan. 20	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD)	1088 Green St., SF
Sat. Jan. 18	Annual Robert Burns Supper	The City Club, SF
Mon. Feb. 17	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. Mar. 16	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Sat. April 4	Tartan Day Scottish Faire at Ardenwood	Fremont, CA
Mon. April 20	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Sat. April 25	John Muir Day / Earth Day celebration.....	NPS - Martinez, CA
Mon. May 18	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. June 15	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. July 20	No Meeting (Summer Recess)	
Sat. July 18	Summer Ceilidh at Encinal Yacht Club	Alameda, CA
Mon. Aug. 17	No Meeting (Summer Recess)	
Sept. 5-6	Caledonian Club's 155th Highland Games & Gathering	Pleasanton, CA
Mon. Sept. 19	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF

About Us

The Saint Andrew's Society of San Francisco

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www.saintandrewsociety.org

Gary Ketchen,
Newsletter Editor

Membership Meetings

Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month, at 7:30 P.M. Light supper served before the meeting. (Free valet parking is provided for members' meetings. MUNI: one block east of Hyde St. cable car).

Officers of the Society

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Allen Cary, First VP
Irené Waldman Costello,
Second VP
Ian Baird, Treasurer
Jek Cunningham, Bard
Susan Goodier, Secretary
(*acting*)
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Roger Weed, John Muir Association
David Walker, University of Edinburgh



**The Saint Andrew's Society
of San Francisco**
1088 Green Street
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Recipient
