

OUT OF THE STONES – an Orkney music project.

This comes to us from Bob Pegg via Carmen Wright.

Some four years ago I was talking with Steve Callaghan, Orkney Islands Council Heritage Officer, when we hit upon what we thought was a really exciting project: to make a CD of the kind of music that could have been heard in Orkney from prehistoric times up until 1468, when the islands were handed over to the King of Scotland - the working title of the CD would be *Out of the Stones*.

Right from the start, we had to confront one big problem. During the period we had chosen, there was no solid evidence of music making on Orkney: no written accounts, no identifiable instruments, no manuscripts. Music is found in all societies, and Orkney would have been no exception, but we had to decide what kind of sounds might have charmed Orcadian ears during a period of around 5500 years.

No-one knows what forms music may have taken in prehistoric times. We can only assume that it would have functioned as it does today, woven

into the fabric of life: to accompany singing, dancing, religious ceremonies; as a part of courting rituals, and lullabying babies to sleep; to raise the spirits when they are low, to whip up martial fervour in times of conflict, and countless other functions. These could be guiding principles for our very early re-creations.

What instruments might the first hunter-gatherers in Orkney have used to make music? My first suggestion would be, what was around them. They would surely have experimented with natural objects, just as we do today. The beach would have been a great musical hunting place. Two pebbles, banged together, can make a great variety of sounds, depending on how they are held. Pierced shells, strung together, can be a rattle, worn on a dancer's wrist or ankle. Stones with holes in can be blown across, like an empty bottle, to produce a warning whistle or to imitate a bird call; and some hollow stones can even be made to produce two distinct notes, like a natural ocarina. Scallops and other ridged shells can be scraped together

to make complex rhythms, just as they still are today in Northern Spain.

Tom Muir, the Kirkwall storyteller, who works for the Orkney Museum, has a wonderful story about his mother, Lizzie Drever, who was born on the island of Westray, and was a girl there in the 1920s. Sometimes, when her father was out fishing, a great fog, a *haar*, would roll in from the sea and swallow up his boat, leaving him out of sight of the land and in danger of being drawn out by the current onto the high seas. When this happened, young Lizzie would go down to the beach and pick up one of the empty *buckie* shells, tiny winkles that are found there in the thousands. Blowing into the shell, she would make a piercing whistle that could be heard way out at sea. Her father would blow through his fingers in reply, and, as they called back and forth, Lizzie used the sound of the shell to guide him back to the shore, and safety. It's not hard to imagine the daughter of one of the early settlers rescuing her father, adrift in his skin boat, in just the same way over 5000 years ago, and the

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SCOTTISH CONNECTION

It's spring, a proverbial time to stop and smell the roses, but giraffes go quite beyond that. In fact, giraffes have an appetite, so to speak, for rose thorns, and it is this appetite which gives giraffes a **Scottish Connection**.

Christopher Viney, a materials chemist for Heriot-Watt University, was fascinated by stories from Africa, complaining that giraffes encroached on rose gardens on the edge of villages to eat the thorns from the shrubs. Though giraffes regularly eat acacia thorns, the thorns of rose bushes, as anyone who has ever wrestled with them can attest, are even, well, thornier, representing a great challenge to gastronomical processes. There must be something, Professor Viney hypothesized, in a giraffe's saliva which enables digestion of rose thorns.

Now, Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh is the eighth oldest institution of higher education in the UK. Named for George Heriot, jeweler and financier of James VI, and famed Scottish engineer and inventor James Watt, the University today is center for science and engineering research, noted especially for its contributions to petrochemistry... and medicine.

Viney is investigating natural lubricants in a project which may have bearing on treatment of various human ailments, such as cystic fibrosis. Quoth Viney, "Mucus isn't generally a popular subject for polite conversation, but in its various forms it's vital for all of us. It is mucus that allows us to breathe, or, in cases like cystic fibrosis, causes problems with breathing. It also allows us to digest food without digesting our own stomachs and plays a vital role

in procreation and fertility."

Enter the giraffe spit. Viney found the stuff to be particularly viscous and is proceeding with his studies to isolate the rose-thorn digesting agent found therein. Beyond its implications in medicine, giraffe saliva might have use as commercial lubricant. Apparently, "the potential applications are huge."

The biggest challenge to Viney so far has been "getting a giraffe to dribble into a glass jar."

So, the next time you visit the giraffes at the zoo, use a lubricant, smell a rose, or put something in a glass jar, remember Christopher Viney, giraffe 'dribble', and their **Scottish Connection**.

Taken from Times Higher Education online and scotland.org.

Bits and Pieces

Recently while visiting in Florida, Sue Malone attended a special quilt show in Titusville. The show, called "Quilting from the Heart XI", featured a very special display:

The Busy Bees: Our Scottish Sister Guild

"Two years ago we were asked to become sisters with The Busy Bees quilt group in Dunfermline, Scotland after a member, Sheena Filbert and her husband, Graham were visiting Florida and attended our quilt show. During the next two years we have exchanged correspondence, quilt blocks for lullaby quilts, a box of meaningful items from their culture and a Space Coast quilt banner from our culture. We will have a Scottish display showing these items and also the beautiful appliquéd quilt top indicative of their Scottish Heritage that they sent to us for the show."

Thanks, Sue, for passing this along! That was no doubt something to see.

We have certainly appreciated the fabulous quilts fashion by loving

and talented hands and auctioned at Burns Nights in the past. Perhaps this article will inspire the making of another quilt this year.



GRACE NOTES

Grace Notes is the official publication of the Memphis Scottish Society, Inc. It is published monthly. Like the Society itself, the credo of *Grace Notes* is "to foster education and promote understanding of things Scottish."

If you have something of interest to readers of this newsletter, please submit a typewritten manuscript to the editorial staff. If the article or notice is very brief (30 words or fewer), e-mail or just use the telephone. *Grace Notes* will accept and publish good quality photographs.

The deadline for all submissions is the second week of each month preceding the month of publication. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope with each submission, if you want the material returned.

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to foster education and
 promote understanding of
 things Scottish



To The Lads Or Simply “The Reply”

I remember that night in March. Later, he called and told me, “No can do poo. Mommie told me, I’m much too young to get married.” Pushing toward 30 weren’t you. After being under his mom’s influence all those years, you’d have thought he’d be able to put the toilet seat down.

Speaking of wedding proposals, Burns wrote the poem Love for Love, regarded by some as a marriage proposal.

“Let love sparkle in her eye, Let her love hae nae man but me, That’s the tocher gude I prize. There the luvver’s treasure lies.”

Now that was a man who knew how to propose to a woman. Burns knew how to make a woman feel special. He complimented them with words about their beauty and made them feel desired.

Yes, Geoffrey has often made me feel admired. I remember one of the compliments he gave me. I’d just gotten my hair cut very short. His comment was. “Hey hon’, from the back you look like a man.”

That’s called living dangerously. Not exactly what Burns would’ve said. Burns would’ve said something like, “Ah, lass, it shows the exquisite curve of your neck, a neck I want to shower in kisses.”

Part of being a true romantic is knowing just the right gift to give. I’m sure Burns also gave his lassies wonderful romantic gifts such as a locket or a heart pendant. Geoffrey too is skilled when it comes to romantic presents. For our thirtieth anniversary, I knew I’d get something special. A gold watch. A sapphire ring. I opened my anniversary gift, my mouth dropped opened and I sighed at the sight of a video- Gordy- about a run away pig. Our 40th is next year, I’m hoping they haven’t released Gordy II

But is it fair to compare Geoffrey or any man to Burns. Burns the pioneer of romance. Can any of you lads live up to Burns? You my gentlemen have surpassed him. Though there is no greater poet or romantic, Burns had a flaw. A minor blemish he seemed quite proud of.

In the same poem I quoted from, is this phrase “Give me love in her I court, love to love makes the sport.” To him love was a sport. In another poem he writes, “Wha canna win her in a night, has little art in courtin’ . I see him as a rooster on top of the barn cockadoodling because he knew he could have any of the hens in the hen house--Elizabeth, Peggy, Jean, Nell, and Mary to name a few.

Despite being a romantic, Burns never could get past the initial love with a woman, the burning lustful love that is at the start of a relationship. While he described women as roses and daisies, his treasure, his bonnie maids or his fair lasses, he was never able to call one his soul-mate or his friend. He never had that lasting, comfortable satisfying love that builds over time.

So lads here tonight, let me say while you might not be a true romantic like Burns, we, lassies know that we have your true love and that you’re worthy of our love and devotion. You are our warriors and defenders, providers of hearth and home--our lovers, best friends, and soul-mates. So lassies please stand and raise your glass to the lads. TO THE LADS!

Thanks Elaine Meece for sharing with us.

A view of the Bonnie Bonnie banks of Loch Lomond, provided by our correspondent Alistair Reid.



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and the sound of the *buckie* whistle against a background of the sea is the very first track on *Out of the Stones*.

For people with little resources, another readily available sound-maker would be the *bullroarer*, an instrument still used by the Australian aboriginal people. This is a flat, elongated object - bone, wood or stone - with a hole pierced in one end. It's whirled around on a cord, and makes a noise like a huge angry wasp, or a great cat growling. A possible bone example around 8500 years old has been found in Denmark, and similar more recent objects have been discovered in the brochs in the Western Isles of Scotland. The sound of the bull-roarers can be heard on the track *Tomb of the Eagles*.

And what about that most widespread of instruments - the drum? Andrew Appleby, the Orkney potter, has a theory that the drum may have been discovered by accident when someone stretched a skin over the top of a clay pot to protect the contents - maybe some precious grain. It's a lovely idea, and impossible to prove, of course, but for people living on islands where there were few trees, a clay drum would have made sense (though in earlier prehistory there would have been more trees on Orkney, so wooden drums would have been possible). On our recording we've been lucky enough to use two of Andrew's pots, covered with goatskin.

Other possibilities for prehistoric instruments include scrapers of bone (and wood), bone buzzers (possible examples have been found on Orkney), clay and metal rattles, clay whistles, bells, and the great horns, the *lurs*, shown on rock

carvings from the late Bronze Age (around 2700 years ago), a pair of which were recovered intact and still playable from a Danish peat bog. We focused on the birch bark trumpet, played by Orkney music teacher Brian Jones, and my personal favorite, the bone whistle or flute. Examples, end blown, go back a long way. For our recording we used an instrument of deer bone, which was made by Stacey O'Gorman, who produces Alba penny whistles in Sutherland. Stacey was handed a bone from a freshly slaughtered animal, and had to clean it up before she began work. She said she never wanted to make one again, but the sound of her instrument is wonderfully rich and is featured on *Out of the Stones* as an example of what can be achieved by a skilled craftsman using the simplest materials.

We thought about what the Vikings might have heard when they first started their raids about 1200 years ago. The Picts did not leave many writings but did leave many famous carved stones, and on some of these stones are images of harps. These harps vary in size, but most are distinctively straight sided. The first appearance is in Nigg, in Easter Ross, probably from the 8th century, but the great inspiration for us came from the 11th century Lethendy tower, in Perthshire. It shows two monks, one playing a harp, the other the triple pipes, with what may be a drum between them. Today, the triple pipes are only played in Sardinia. Two melody pipes and one drone, with single reeds, are placed in the mouth of a player who uses circular breathing (like a didgeridoo player) to make a continuous sound. We can only

speculate how they came to be found in Pictland - possibly they arrived there from Ireland - but the potential for a great combination of sounds was irresistible. We flew in triple pipe player Barnaby Brown from Sardinia and, together with percussionist Alistair Macleod and harper Bill Taylor, he made the kind of music which might just have been heard by the Vikings when they started to make more durable contact with the inhabitants of the Orkney islands.

Bill Taylor was my collaborator on *Out of the Stones*. We worked together previously on a recording called *Breaking the Silence: Music Inspired by the Picts*. Bill, originally from Washington State, knows an enormous amount about early Celtic harp music. His playing on reconstructed Pictish harps - beautifully made from native woods by Ardival Harps of Strathpeffer - is one of the main unifying threads in our new recording.

A great inspiration for us was the realisation that, during the historical period covered by our project, Orkney was not the quiet, isolated place that it seems today, but a major maritime crossroads, where folk from many lands and cultures would have met and partied - especially if they were musicians!

Another track on *Out of the Stones* comes from a late 13th century manuscript, now in Uppsala University Library, with two pieces written by the same hand, both with Latin texts. One celebrates the Marriage of Margaret, daughter of Alexander III of Scotland with Erik Magnusson, the King of Norway, in 1281. The other is in praise of Magnus Erlendsson, uncle of Earl

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Rognvaldr, who was murdered on the island of Egilsay in 1116 or thereabouts, and in whose memory the Earl had built the magnificent cathedral in Kirkwall. This piece of music is the famous *Hymn for St Magnus*. It's written in two parts, in thirds, and used to be thought of as both an example of distinctive Norse polyphony, and something exclusively Orcadian. It does now seem to have been neither, rather a re-working of musical themes common in Northern Europe at that time, but, whatever its provenance, this by-product of the Magnus cult, which grew up after his death, still has a plangent freshness and serenity which can captivate today. It's usually recorded with a full choir, but we decided on a quiet, intense, devotional version with just the solo voice of James Ross and Bill Taylor's harp.

Two of my favourite instruments are featured on *Out of the Stones*. The first is one of the great musical finds of the Viking world. In 1976, excavations were taking place in Coppergate, in the English city of York, which was once the important Viking port of Jorvik. In a 10th century pit, a set of boxwood panpipes was found. They weren't like the panpipes we know from Ancient Greece, or from South America, separate tubes of reed or cane, tied together in a row. Instead they were made from a solid block of wood with holes of varying lengths skilfully drilled down into it, to make the different notes. The Jorvik pipes had been broken - perhaps that's why they were thrown into the Coppergate pit - but reconstruction gave a scale of five notes, roughly from

A to E in the modern major scale, giving a flattened third note to make the beginning of the old Dorian scale. Stacey O'Gorman made the replica I play on *Out of the Stones*, perhaps as close to the sound of Viking music as we can get.

My other favourite instrument from the Viking period is the one sometimes called the *Jew's harp* (though nobody knows why). In Scotland it's the *trump*, in France the *guimbarde*, in Sweden the *mungiga*, in Italy the *Scacciapensieri Siciliano* and so on - through Europe and the Middle East, out to the Phillipine Islands. The instrument can be made of bamboo, though from Europe to Mongolia it's a small metal frame with a flexible metal tongue set into it. The frame is held against the teeth with one hand, the metal tongue is twanged with the thumb or first finger of the other hand, and the mouth acts as a sound box. The resulting sound sometimes reminds people of the didgeridoo; in skilled hands the instrument can be made to play, to talk - even, when played by an Altai virtuoso, to imitate the sound of horses' hooves. I love this instrument because it's cheap to buy, you can keep it in your pocket, and it's fun to play! On *Out of the Stones* we've experimented by teaming up the trump with a harp to duet on a medieval dance, the *Estampie*.

To give a real sense of place to the recording, we linked purely instrumental tracks with natural and sometimes particularly Orcadian sounds: the grinding of a saddle quern, a rotary quern turning, the buzzing of the *snorrie bone*, children playing on a beach, a *lur* trumpet amid a thunderstorm. Late

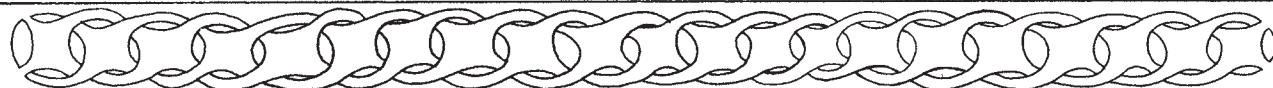
in the day, a solo track of Alison McMorland singing the ancient ballad *The Twa Sisters* was added to the rich aural stew: and the last major undertaking before the project was completed was to look far outside the boundaries of Orkney. We were able to use the authentic Orkney accent of Tom Muir to read translations of the skaldic verses that the Earl Rognvaldr and his friends wrote throughout their long journey (1151-53, they're noted down in the *Orkneyinga Saga*).

Three years in the making, *Out of the Stones* was launched in St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, in September 2005. Bill Taylor, James Ross and I had the time of our lives singing, playing, and, in my case, telling stories along with the children of Papdale School. We were invited back in 2008, when Orkney celebrated the 850th anniversary of the death of Rognvaldr.

What of the future? At present no definite plans, but it would be wonderful to mount a series of live performances throughout Europe and the Middle East featuring musicians from the countries that Rognvaldr visited during his pilgrimage. The old Viking questing could come alive again, but this time in the spirit of international peace.

Out of the Stones CD is available from the Orkney Museum, Broad Street, Kirkwall, Orkney Islands KW15 1DH 12 lbs retail 1.5 lbs for P&P.

A Special thanks to Carmen Wright for submitting this great article.



Drummer News

An Ohio man who was suspended as the drum major of a band for giving President Obama a nod during January's inaugural parade is calling it quits. John Coleman resigned from the Cleveland firefighters Memorial Pipes & Drums a week after the parade in Washington. Publicity about his suspension had gotten to be too much, he told CNN affiliate WEWS. It's come to a point where I don't want embarrassment anymore between the pipe band and myself." Coleman, who is a firefighter told WEWS news.

Coleman was seen during the nationally televised January 20 parade nodding toward the new president while marching with the band. A few steps later, he appeared to wave briefly.

He told WEWS that as the band was marching past the grandstand where Obama

was sitting, he made eye contact with the president. "Contact was made with our eyes both together and he smiled and waved at the band," he told the station. "And just as a gesture, I nodded my head. I gave him a slight wave and went on."

Representatives from the group did not return calls from CNN. But bandleader Mike Engle told the Cleveland Plain Dealer that Coleman was suspended because he ignored military protocol. "We had gone over and over time and again with everyone in the band that this was a military parade," Engle told the newspaper. "Protocol and proper decorum had to be followed at all times. Unfortunately, John chose to ignore that."

Coleman had been suspended from the band for six months. In a written statement, band manager Ken Rybka said Coleman's

resignation from group "comes as a shock and surprise." The band has been inundated with phone calls, e-mails and messages on its Internet pages – almost all of them critical – since the story first broke, Rybka said.

"It is unfortunate that an internal band issue has raised so much discussion and ire from the general public." Rybka said in the statement. "It has disheartened me more than you can imagine." Rybka said that he will be taking a leave of absence from the band because of the furor. "The 'afterglow' of participating in the inaugural parade is gone," he said.

I would love to hear the opinions of our pipers as to the punishment meted out for this infraction, and will leave my opinion private until I hear from you. SRich

WKNO

After several months of slim pickin's WKNO Channel 10 TV is providing three programs of interest to our members: "Appalachia: A History of Mountains and People", "Masterpiece: My Boy Jack", and at least one episode of "We Shall Remain: American Experience".

"Appalachia" is a four-part series airing Thursdays, April 9, 16, 23, and 30 at 9 pm. The history of this unique segment of the U.S. closely parallels the migration of many Scots and Scotch-Irish to the New World. The second episode is of particular

interest.

"My Boy Jack" features Daniel Radcliffe (Hollywood's Harry Potter) as British author Rudyard Kipling's son, "who triggers a bitter family conflict when he joins the Irish Guard at the outset of World War I."

"We Shall Remain" is a five-part series on the history of American Indians since the re-location of Europeans into North America. The episodes are shown on Mondays at 8 pm, starting on April 13th. Be sure to catch the 3rd segment, aired on April 27th.

And finally, a message from

WKNO's sponsors, um, which is to say, us, the viewing public. Because of the moratorium of the HDTV conversion TV stations must broadcast in both the old & the new formats for several months. PBS stations such as WKNO Channel 10 are particularly under-budgeted to meet this unexpected turn of events. Our most frequent purveyor of "all things Scottish" (though sadly Tartan TV is once again off the schedule) deserves our self-interested support, especially during this latest of their economic challenges.

CSWT - May Day Ceilidh Picnic

I am Dena Shewmaker, Vice President and Vendor Chair for the Celtic Society of West TN.

The CSWT is holding a May Day Ceilidh Picnic at Lambuth University in Jackson, TN. on Saturday, May 2, 2009 from 11:00 am - 4:00 pm.

We are planning booth spaces for 3 vendors, 2 society groups, a genealogy tent, and will have 3

performance groups. Games and activities will take place throughout the day. Families from all over the region will be invited to bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the day with old-fashioned sack races, Celtic music, and learn more about the heritage of the Celts.

We would very much like for the Memphis Scottish Society to participate if possible. Anybody

that wants to help us man the tent, please contact Sammy Rich @ 272-7159 or srich1001@comcast.net.

Dena Shewmaker,
CSWT Vice President

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www.cswt.org

org<<http://www.cswt.org/>>

Calendar of Events

Mondays

Caledonia Chorale 7 pm
Church of the Holy Communion,
Walnut Grove at Perkins,
272-7159

Thursdays

Sgt. W.K. Singleton Pipes & Drums

6:30-8:30 at Bethel Pentecostal
Church, Stage Road in Bartlett;
call 386-2052 for info.

Wolf River Pipes & Drums,

6:30-9:30 at St. Luke's Lutheran;
Germantown Parkway. 753-9494

Fridays

Dancing: 7:30-10 pm, Idlewild
Presbyterian; 1750 Union Ave,
West Entrance - 274-1889
2nd, & 4th Friday:
Scottish Country Dancing.

Sundays

NEAC Pipes and Drums
1:30-4:00
First Presb. Church; Southwest Dr
Jonesboro, AR exit 45

April 6

2009 Tartan Day Celebration
Celtic Crossing

Monday, April 13

MSSI Monthly Meeting
Jason's Deli @
Poplar & Highland
For directions call 757-4200 or
memphisscots.com.
6:00 pm Dinner
7:00 pm Program:
Ben Kemker "Robin Hood"

April 17-19

29th Arkansas Scottish Festival
Batesville, AR

Thursday, April 24

Board Meeting at 5:45
St. Lukes Lutheran
2000 N Gtown Pkwy

May 2

CSWT May Day Ceilidh Picnic
Lambuth Univ. Jackson, TN
11:00-4:00

Scottish/Celtic

RadioMusic

Sundays, 6-7 p.m.

"The Thistle and Shamrock"

WKNO-FM 91.1

Saturdays, 10 a.m.

-1 p.m. *"Strands of the Celtic
Knot"* Robert Campbell, host
WEVL-FM 89.9

Sun and Mon 6 p.m. and

Fridays, 7 p.m.

"The Thistle & Shamrock,"

WMAV-FM 90.3

April 9: Bridges

There are many songs and tunes commemorating the landmarks that span our rivers and railways. Every bit as powerful as these physical structures, music is our bridge across time and place and our way to connect with one another. Cross all forms of bridges with us this week.

April 16: Springsong

Here are the full flavours of the season in life affirming acoustic sounds from the coastal communities of the Atlantic archipelago. April 23: Notes in the Wilderness From traditional odes to the wilderness and contemporary songs of concern, our music this week sings of wild and unspoiled

landscapes and challenges us to preserve them.

April 30: All Women

We focus upon music from some of today's leading women artists, including Òran na Mnà (a Woman's song), original Gaelic compositions by Maggie MacInnes "linking the voices and feelings of women from centuries past to the present day."

May 7: Little Windows

Meet Julee Glaub and Mark Weems who mix Appalachian and Irish music and relish the beauty of two unaccompanied voices in close harmony. Hear them weave their timeless harmonies and talk about the power of communal song.

April 2: For Freedom Alone

In 1320 a landmark document set out the principles of democracy on which the U.S. constitution was later based. The Declaration of Arbroath is remembered today in Tartan Day celebrations held throughout the U.S. and in fiddler Laura McGhee's "Arbroath Suite."



The piano accordion is played by Donald Mackenzie of Skye (a member of The Incredible Fling Band that Willie Fisher helped form - there are web-bits about them), the guitar is by Rab Collinson from Largs, the bel-lows pipes by Dougie Pincock, a lecturer at <http://www.musicplockton.org>, and the button-box accordion by Graham Irvine of Dunoon. Ahh, what a night it must be to sit around with a few friends and play and sing and laugh! Ceilidh life at its finest. Thanks to Adam Miller for the photos and identifying who is playing. He is another one of our correspondents from the homeland.

Next Monthly Meeting - Monday, April 13th
 Jason's Deli - Poplar and Highland
 Dinner at 6:00, Program @ 7:00 Ben Kemker "Robin Hood"
 Regular Board Meeting, April 24th at 5:45 St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran -
 2000 N. Germantown Parkway

GRACE NOTES

The Memphis Scottish Society, Inc.

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