



Happy St. Andrew's Day, Everybody:

This has been another year for the pandemic. As predicted last year, food costs continue to rise. There's talk about a Covid Passport. Vaccines have been developed and booster shots are on the way. There is little excuse for not following the guidelines. Keep safe.

On Saturday, August 7, Rob drove us to Waterdown and he did a fine job repairing the cement on the inside of the door frame of the McGregor-Ross Mausoleum. Alas, the old Fish-and-Chip shop had closed, but we located another place to eat. The Hamilton Cemeteries organization has agreed to install two glass-front niches (18" X 12 ½ ") with anodized aluminum and marble trim. Then the building will officially become the McGregor-Ross Columbarium.





Changes To The Rosster

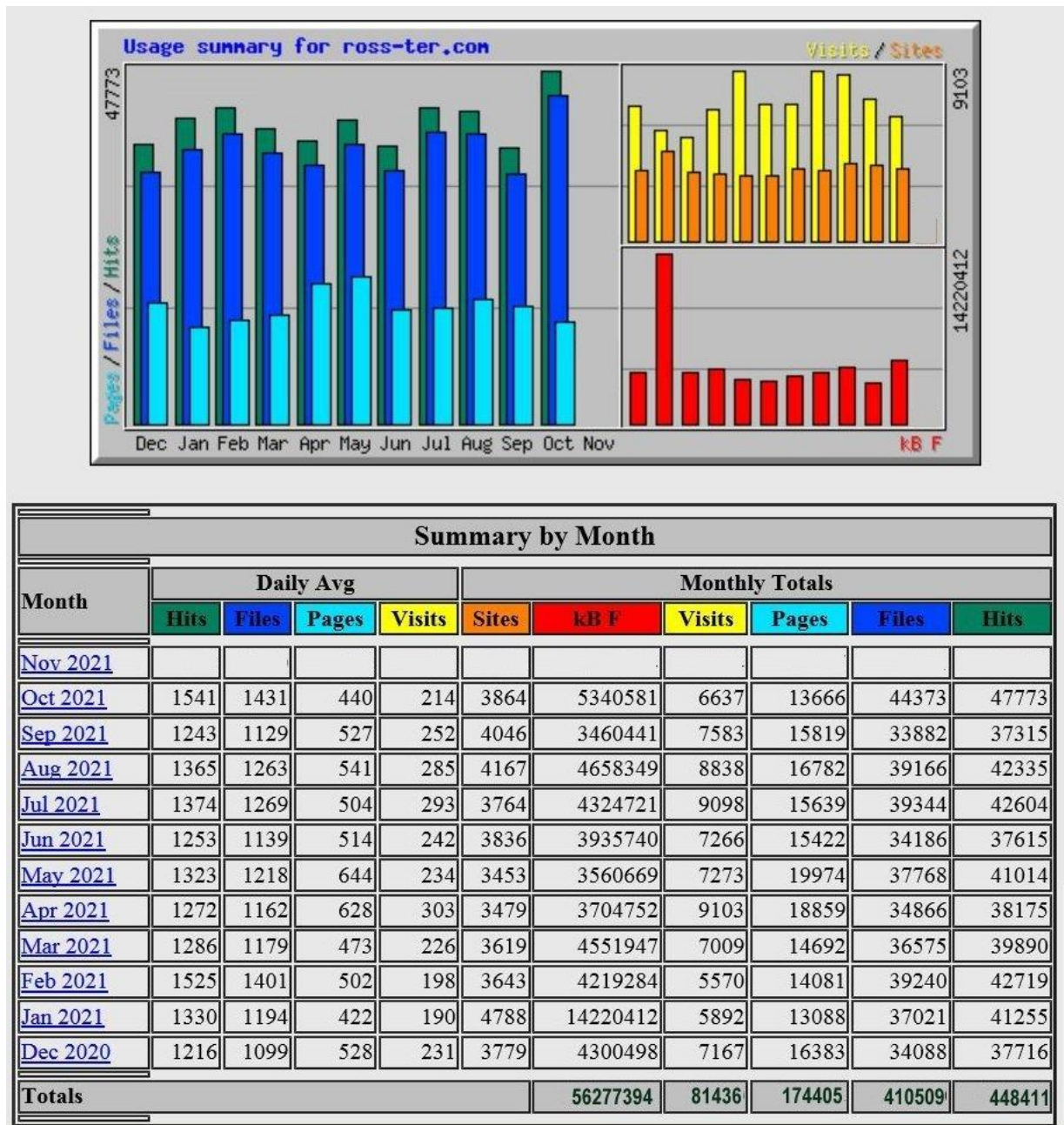
We depend upon members for updates. Only one was received for 2021.

Births

E6A3D2B – Aurelia, a daughter to John Gordon Young (E6A3D2) and Katherine Hogan at 9:00 am on November 24, 2021, in London, Ontario. Aurelia is a sister for Levi William Young.

The Data Subscription Plan was terminated last year. The Family Tree basic plan continues to be supported each March.

It has been quite some since the statistical charts have been included with our report. For what it's worth, here they are (minus the complete records for this month).



A Racy Page



The usual races and distance challenges, with the exception of the Toronto Women's Run 5k in October, were virtual. Strava, a GPS app on Patricia's phone and watch,



recorded the route, distance, and finish time for each virtual race and challenge. These data, with a screen shot of the event, were then uploaded to Race Roster, a challenge platform that kept track of the finishing time for each race as well as the progress of the distance challenges. She and Rob did the Move Your Paws Virtual 5k in March, plus both

the Oasis Zoo Run Virtual 5k and the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon Virtual 5k in September. Both are currently working on the TTC Challenge (76.5 k, the length of the Toronto Subway Line) from November 15 to December 15). In addition, Patricia completed the Toronto Women's Run 416k challenge in four months and both Rob and Patricia finished The Great Barrier Reef (230k) in July.

The Way It Is: The Sgian Dubh

Sgian Dubh, pronounced "skian doo", meaning "Black Knife" due to the fact that it is normally carried concealed, was a weapon of last resort. The sheathed knife is worn on the right side of the right leg in the top of the stocking behind the rear flash. Nothing is more associated with the traditional concept of Scottish attire than the sgian Dubh.



Sgian Dubh

It is a relict of an earlier weapon called the *sgian-achiais* which was worn either near the cuff of the sleeves or hidden in a pocket under the arm. As such, it was singularly useful for self-defence in very close quarters when dirks or broadswords were not practical or had been put aside momentarily. It was a normal practice to remove swords, dirks, targes and pistols when entering a room or visiting a fellow clansman and friend. However, when sleeping over, everyone needed a wee measure of protection, since the doors had no locks. Therefore, the Sgian dubh could be placed on a boot or piece of apparel "just in case" and in plain view for all to see.

The sgian dubh was a tool carried in a manner similar to the way that someone might carry a pocket knife now. It is likely that the sgian was once a regular knife used for skinning hunted prey, but daily use for cutting food was also possible. It was simply a handy tool. Today, a vast majority of them are not sharpened, nor could they retain a honed edge. They are sometimes sold with hilt and sheath connected without a blade. Nevertheless, it is best to check it with your luggage or leave it behind when you must pass through a security check-point. In the USA, one might also meet that rare, uninformed or unsophisticated sheriff who has never seen a skian dubh and might consider it to be a concealed weapon.

References

- *Electric Scotland website - general searches about Highland weaponry*
- *Clan Magazines and Newsletters - e.g. Clan Leslie*
- *The Royal Regiment of Scotland - Dress Regulations*
- *General Internet Searches - definition and use of the sgian dubh*

Jenn's Update

Jenn was appointed a National Race officer by Sail Canada. She is scheduled to help with sailing events in British Columbia and Ontario next year, including a North American Championship in Nanaimo and the Canada Games. The sailing portion of the Canada Games are at Niagara-on-the-Lake from August 15th to 21st.

Jenn was diagnosed with Stage 3 colorectal cancer, had surgery and chemo, and is currently doing well.



Rob's Blurb

Rob has continued working at one of Canada's largest travel technology companies. Since returning from furlough in January, he has been promoted to Director, Support Services.

In his spare time, Rob is continuing to try new food recipes, in addition to the wine production. The peach wine he made last year turned out really well. It didn't last long, so next time he'll be making more!

Rob has walked several five-kilometer virtual runs during the year with his mother.

Patricia's Progress

This year the professional, volunteer, and personal activities that Patricia usually attended in person were cancelled. Using Zoom, an online platform, she was able to participate in Quilt Canada, her local quilt group meetings, and the SAQA (Studio Quilt Artists Association) meeting held in Oceania. Using the extra time available, she was able to work on a "Block of the Month" quilt. Each month a package containing everything needed for that month's block arrived in the mail.

We lugged our giant banana tree variety into the family room from the patio before the frost arrived at the end of the month.



Doug's Doings

During the pandemic, Doug has become his own barber. Fortunately, Patricia volunteered to assist with a trim just before she took this photo, which shows Doug exploring penmanship as an aspect of chirography. (Has the advent of computer technology resulted in the disappearance of handwriting from the

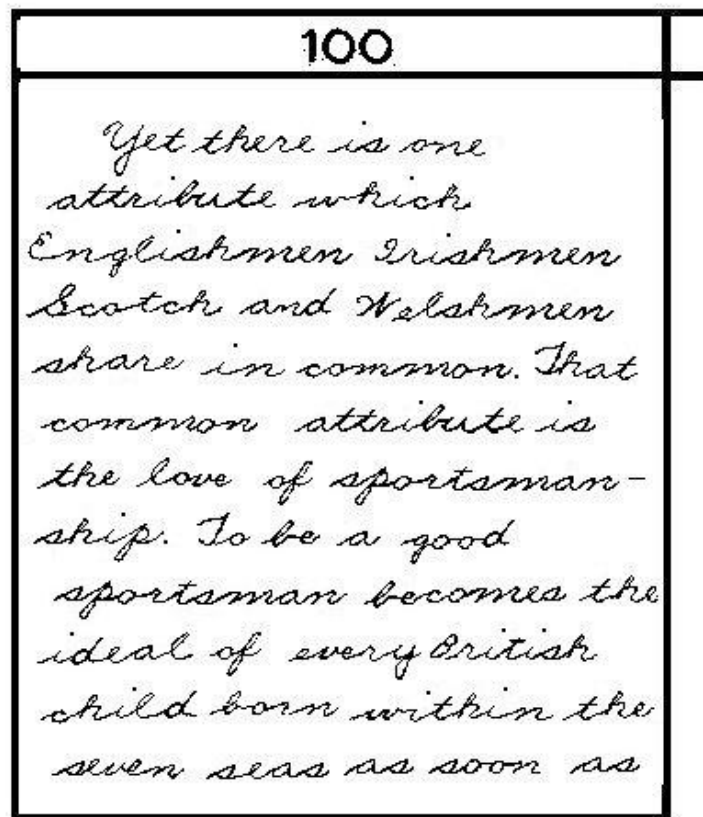
school curriculum?)

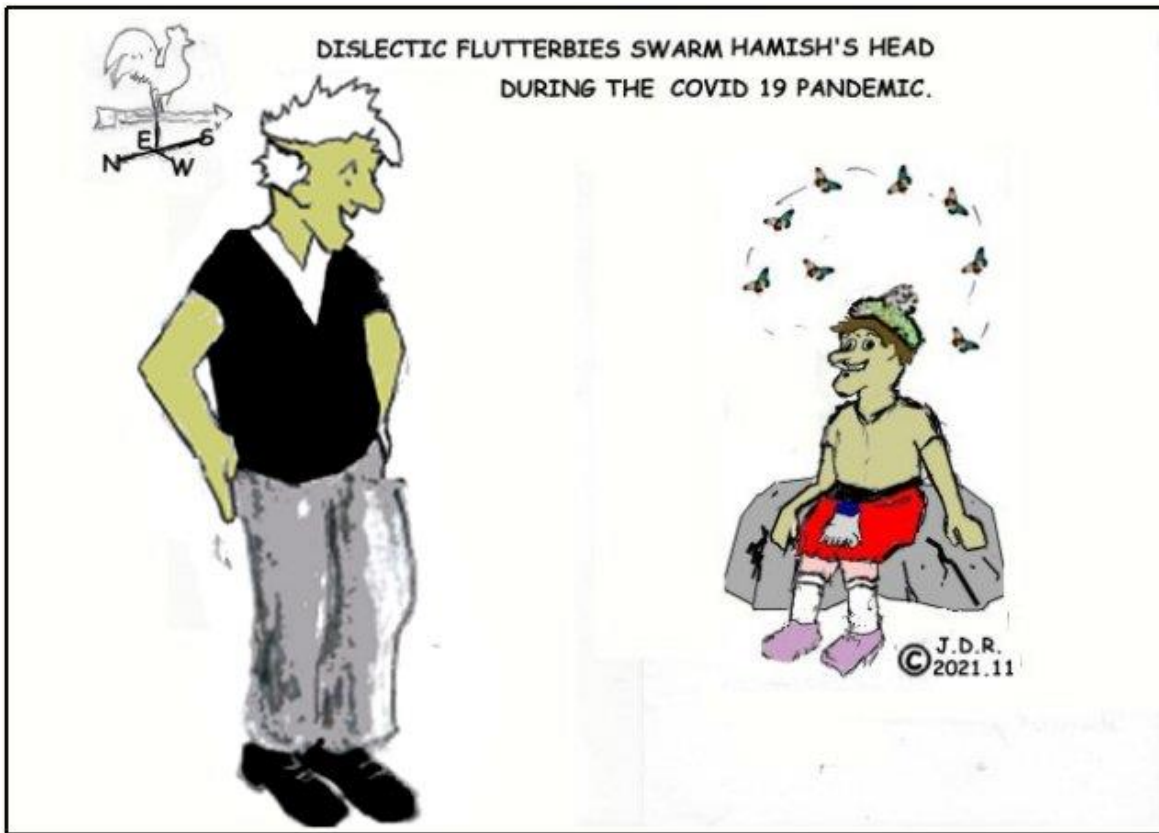
As noted elsewhere, Doug continues development of the Waterdown mausoleum, the Ross-ter, and updates to the My Heritage family tree.

Handwriting of Yesteryear

Toronto developed its handwriting scale of grades 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90 and 100. Unfortunately, the Toronto board of education paid little attention to the intellectual quality of the sample to be copied . . . a talk by Edward, Prince of Wales, about sportsmanship in London on January 7, 1924, before serving briefly as King Edward VIII in 1936. Obviously, they selected the sample before Edward's scandalous abdication from the British throne. The following section was chosen:

"Yet there is one attribute which Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotch and Welshmen share in common. That common attribute is the love of sportsmanship. To be a good sportsman becomes the ideal of every British child born within the seven seas as soon as he can understand the meaning of the word. Nor is the ideal of the understanding of it only confined to British men and boys. It colours the life of the whole nation, irrespective of sex. It teaches men to respect women, and women to admire manliness." A copy of writing graded 100 follows.





Here is a fancy, handy Christmas Countdown if you truly need one: <http://www.yourchristmascountdown.com/>. Don't forget NORAD's traditional Santa Claus tracker for the kids on Christmas Eve at <http://www.noradsanta.org/>. There is also a fine assortment of games, puzzles and stories for kids of all ages at <http://www.electricscotland.com/kids/index.htm> thanks to our friend Alastair MacIntyre.

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Best wishes to everyone!  
Sincerely,  
Doug and Patricia Ross