

GRACE NOTES

Vol. 22, No. 10

Oct. 2006

The Monthly Newsletter of the Memphis Scottish Society, Inc.

The Ghosts of Mary King's Close

The dark, claustrophobic streets running off the Royal Mile lead away from the light and downhill into the shadows. These half-forgotten reminders of Edinburgh's unsanitary past provide a perfect setting for a suitably spooky atmosphere. Largely built upon the ruins of centuries gone by, it is not just those of a sensitive nature who feel a certain frisson when they walk past. Admitting to a spine-chilling creepiness is one thing, but deciding that you believe in ghosts is quite another.

There are few places better situ-

ated to debating paranormal phenomena than Mary King's Close, Edinburgh's notoriously haunted spot below the City Chambers. The close was inhabited during the 16th and 17th centuries before the plague ravaged families living in the tightly packed tenement buildings. A century after the illness broke out, the city partly sealed the abandoned homes and alleyways, prompting chilling stories about paranormal sightings of previ-

ous inhabitants.

The celebrity of the close's supernatural resident is Annie, a ghostly pre-teen who (so the story goes) scared the daylights out of a Japanese psychic in 1992. This lady had been unimpressed by the tour until she arrived at one of the many small rooms. There she was suddenly struck by an overwhelming

(cont. on page 2)

Hold on to your hats!

...or hoods...or skulls! It's time for the Halloween party! And, boy, do we know how to do Samhain right! On Saturday, October 28th at 7:00pm we'll gather in St. Columba's Gates Pavilion for the usual hijinx and a few surprises.

MSSI will provide hot dogs, drinks, and table ware; gatherers will pot-luck all the other stuff. Use this as a guide, by initial letter of your last name: A thru G – chips, dips, appetizers; H thru L – side dishes, slaw, salad; M – non-hot-dog entrees; N thru R – buns; S thru Z – desserts, fruits, nuts. Of course, if you want to bring something additional, feel welcome to do so!

There will be prizes for best costume, and there will be games, music, and dancing! So, ask your best ghoul-friend for a date on 10/28. Be there or be scared! (Or maybe both!)



YOUR MSSI BOARD

President

Ben Kemker..... 386-9909
ben.kemker@memphisscots.com

Vice President

Mary Ann Lucas.....725-1879
maryann.lucas@memphisscots.com

Treasurer

John Simmons.....272-9240
john.simmons@memphisscots.com

Secretary

Dena Warth.....837-1413
dena.warth@memphisscots.com

Members at Large

Emily Smith.....683-6416
emily.smith@memphisscots.com

Bill Halliday.....682-8297
bill.halliday@memphisscots.com

John Schultz754-2419
john.schultz@memphisscots.com

(cont. from pg. 1)

feeling of sickness, hunger and cold and, when she tried to leave, felt the ghastly tug of a ghostly hand on her leg.

Poor Annie's spectral life has now been fleshed out, and it is believed that she had been left to die by her family. Since then, people from round the world have come to "Annie's room". Many have told tour guides of seeing impressions of the spirit in the room; some visitors, treating the room as a shrine, have left gifts for the little girl out of affection.

Sceptic, believer, or something in-between, the tour itself is a wonderful experience and well orchestrated by the operators, Continuum. Authentically dressed guides lead visitors out of the sunshine downstairs into the murky past through vaults and alleyways that form the remnants of 17th-century Edinburgh. They punctuate the gloom with eye-opening and historical information, practised banter and the occasional heart-thumping shock. The uncharacteristic drop in temperature in Annie's room is disconcerting.

A growing list of people who believe they've seen spirits here has led to a number of experiments being conducted in the close. Ryan O'Neill from Scottish Paranormal, a group of amateur enthusiasts of the supernatural, captured "very faint white or transparent spheres" when photographing the recreated workshop. His group hopes to find these "spiritual orbs" again when they conduct experiments during the Edinburgh Ghost festival in May. The team use scientific equipment to measure electromagnetic fluctuations of temperatures and record

anything odd. However, they don't confine themselves to hard science when investigating the phenomena, but also use psychics and mediums to see whether their experiences tally with the scientific findings. They are also keen to involve members of the public in their investigations. "I want to get their feelings and sensations," says O'Neill. "I want them to see what it is we do and to see there is a scientific side to our work."

The close is not short of scientists looking into paranormal activity. In April 2001, Dr. Richard Wiseman of Hertfordshire University invited the public to join him for a series of experiments. Wiseman is returning, this time with scientists in tow, to conduct another set of tests. He is seeking the help of more than 200 members of the public to participate in his experiments and the results will be compared with his 2001 findings.

Assisting him will be Dr. Caroline Watt of Edinburgh University's Koestler Unit. She says that 40 per cent or more of people participating in the previous experiment reported having experiences. Luckily, Watt

doesn't have to rely on the public to describe what they saw, as she had her own experience of ghosts in Mary King's Close during a previous experiment. "I was in a part of the close where no one else was supposed to be," she says. "I heard footsteps and the sound of rustling clothing. From a professional point of view, I was annoyed because I thought it was someone intruding on our experiment, but when I asked the tour guides, I found out there was no one there."

Which does rather beg the question, just who was intruding on whom in the darkness of Mary King's Close? —Brendan O'Brien - Scotsman.com May 5, 2005 - Thanks to Dan Irvin for this contribution.

Scottish Humour

The undertaker sent a telegram to the bereaved man, telling him his mother-in-law had died and asking whether he wanted her embalmed, cremated or buried. Back came the reply: "All three - tak' nae chances." - L Cheryl Noland

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), just use the telephone. *Grace Notes* will accept and publish good quality photographs (preferably black and white; no Polaroids, please).

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.

Editorial Staff

Mary Ann Lucas - maryann.lucas@memphisscots.com Editor, (901-725-1879)
Sammy Rich - sammy.rich@memphisscots.com Publisher, (901-272-7159)
Gavin Anderson - gavin.anderson@memphisscots.com Circulation Editor, (901-682-5485)
Melissa Gibson - melissa.gibson@memphisscots.com Line Editor, (901 299-3170)

Please address all correspondence to:

Grace Notes

The Memphis Scottish Society, Inc.
gracenotes@memphisscots.com
P. O. Box 241934
Memphis, TN 38124-1934

to foster education
and promote
understanding of
things Scottish



SCOTTISH CONNECTION

Scottish Connection

Everyone loves a bargain, so here's a 2-in-1 Scottish Connection: John M(a)cAdam. That may seem like only one, but read farther.

John Loudon McAdam, born in Ayr in 1756, immigrated to America in 1770, just in time to serve as a prize agent in the Revolution. He returned to Scotland in 1783. There he purchased an estate and was immediately and literally immersed in miles of bad road. Being an engineer, he developed a process for making smooth hard road surfaces that were more passable and durable than the then-

prevalent dirt or gravel roads. Such roads came to be known as "macadams" (pronounced "mack-AD-ums") and are still the predominate paving method used throughout the world. It was and is touted as the greatest innovation in road-building since Roman times. Additionally, McAdam also developed a second paving substance now used extensively in paving airport runways: tarmac, literally the "tar of McAdam".

OK, where's the 2-in-1, you may ask? Well, it's in John MacAdam, that is, the OTHER John MacAdam. This one was born near Glasgow in 1837 and became a physician. He immigrated to Australia in 1855 and served

his old & new countries (& Queen Victoria) in many distinguished ways, including umpiring the 1st Australian rules (read that, "rough and tumble") football games. Dr. MacAdam is best remembered today as the namesake of the macadamia nut. Since it is pronounced "mack-uh-DAME-i-uh" instead of "mack-Ad-um-i-uh", you can certainly be forgiven for not knowing that.

So, next time you're traveling on a macadam road or standing on the airport tarmac or eating macadamia nuts, remember their Scottish Connection.

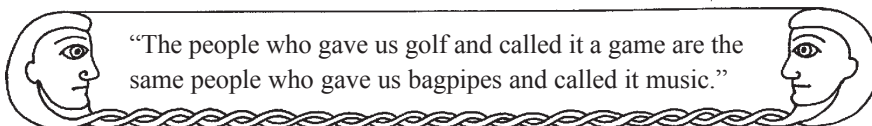
Picnic Recap

Well, it didn't happen in June or July or even in August, but it was technically still summer when MSSI held its annual summer picnic on September 9. Approximately 40 members and guests enjoyed each other's company and the beautiful afternoon at the pavilion at St. Columba Conference Center. A potluck dinner was featured; however, the highlight of the event was a homemade ice cream contest. Contenders for the prize included Sammy Rich's creamy peach ice cream and Margaret Zavodny's Irish cream and chocolate chip blend. After much deliberation and careful consideration, the judges selected Beck Trafford's banana nut ice cream as the grand prize winner.

Maybe we should have a fried chicken taste test next time! Thanks to John Scultz (and his able assistant Kathy!) for a truly enjoyable time.

Chance to serve

Here's an opportunity to serve the community and have some fun at the same time. Second Editions, the second hand bookstore at the Central Branch of the Memphis and Shelby County Library, is looking for volunteers to serve three hour shifts once a week. Please contact Nancy Gresham for more information, 415-2878. Thank you!





**Ice
cream
you
scream
we all
scream
for Ice
cream**

MSSI 2006 Picnic Pict's





Clanjamfry 2006



Ghostly links to Scotland's past

Scotland has long been a country fascinated with the unexplained. Whether it is the haunting sounds of the headless drummer of Edinburgh Castle or the lonely child ghost pining for her doll in Mary King's Close, many important historical moments and landmarks are associated with paranormal activity. Despite highly documented work on the existence and prevalence of ghosts in Scotland, however, many stories of sightings have proved to be pranks of adolescents. During the 1930s in particular - with a surge in filmic, theatrical and literal representations of them in popular culture, coupled with the antics of the famous ghost hunter Harry Price at the Borley Rectory in England - ghosts were a popular fascination and a source of many mischievous deeds.

One such case appeared in *The Scotsman* on August 4, 1936. James Frail, a young man from Fife, was fined for breaching the peace after spooking Harry Bayne on a farm in Keltie. It seems Frail jumped out on the road in front of Bayne, emulating a terrifying spook before his victim "ran a distance of half a mile in a state of extreme fright and perspiring freely. Since then he had had pneumonia and, while that could not be deliberately attributed to the fright he had, the fact remained that he had been very ill since then." Another tale comes from the far reaches of Campbeltown, on Kintyre. During the autumn and winter between 1937 and 1939, *The Scotsman* noted how the citizens of Campbeltown, in particular women and children, were terrorised by practical jokers who masqueraded around the area. After the initial scares, a group of vigilantes was formed to find the perpetrators. The townsfolk patrolled the streets at night, armed with cudgels. The citizens believed they were saved from the prank in October 1938, when a 16-foot padded dummy dressed in white, with outstretched arms and a wig made of wool, was found resting against the war memorial. The local police station

retained the dummy and the town believed the antics were over. Yet a week later the pranksters were back, appearing at the windows of uninhabited houses and those of elderly women, terrifying the locals with their ethereal shrieks and wails. *The Scotsman* reported on November 8, 1938, one "ghost" was forced to jump into the water of the mill dam after he was cornered in the local gasworks. It wrote: "Just when capture seemed inevitable, three whistles were heard coming from the midst of the mill dam, and a motor car ... drew up opposite the dam. Before the vigilantes realised what was happening, a dripping figure struggled out of the dam, ran across the road, and jumped into the car." Three days later, a bemused Scotsman reporter told how the spirit made yet another escape when the mystery person climbed on to a high wall to escape capture in a disused distillery before "a sentry on duty outside saw the ghost descending by jumps of ten to twelve feet at a time, clutching at narrow ledges as he paused to check the speed of his descent. He reached the ground safely and made off into the darkness." After this incident, the spook was [named] "Spring-heeled Jack" by the locals, acknowledging his athletic prowess....

Then, on October 21 1939 nearly two months after the outbreak of the Second World War, the spectres returned, taking advantage of the blackouts imposed by the British government and scaring women and children at night while the locals struggled to catch them. The last mention of the jokers was made six days later, when two travellers noted an apparition crossing a garden enclave followed closely by the volunteers. Though the residents insisted they would continue to "search incessantly", no mention is made thereafter of the "ghosts". Who knows what happened to Spring-heeled Jack and his accomplices, who plagued the people of Campbeltown.

Perhaps they stopped when they were called up to fight in the war; perhaps, as Hitler's power encroached on their lives, they didn't want to be a vain of the town's existence. Or perhaps, they simply disappeared into the shadows, awaiting a return to the town to terrorise the women and children once more. Graham Fraser – July 2006 - Thanks for sharing this, Dan Irvin!



Who (or what) was behind the mask of the Campbeltown incidents remains a bit of a mystery.



Campbeltown is a peaceful place on Kintyre, Argyll & Bute, but the same could not always have been said some 70 years ago.

Calendar of Events

Mondays

Caledonia Chorale 7:00 p.m. -
Church of the Holy Communion,
Walnut Grove at Perkins, 272-7159
for more info.

Thursdays

Wolf River Pipes & Drums, 6:30-
9:30 at St. Luke's Lutheran;
G'town Pkwy. 753-9494 for more
info.

Fridays

Dancing: 7:30 til 10:00 p.m. -
Idlewild Pres.; 1750 Union Ave,
West entrance.

1st, 3rd & 5th Friday

Contra Dancing. 278-1216.

2nd & 4th Friday

Scottish Country Dancing. 274-1889.

October 3

Board Meeting at Shoneys Syc-
amore View and Summer- 5:30 pm.

October 9

Regular monthly meeting at Holiday
Inn, Poplar and I-240. Reservations
required by Thursday, 10/5, call 725-
1879 or online at MemphisScots.com.
6:00 pm dinner & 7:00 pm Program:

Ben Kemker: "If you think you
know Andrew, you don't know
Jack-son"

October 23

Kirkin' of the Tartans - First
Presbyterian Church in Green-
wood, MS; for details, 753-9494.

October 28

MSSI Halloween party - St.
Columba, Gates Pavilion, 7:00 pm
till the haints come home. See
page 1 for complete details.



October 5 | Horizons

Tune into sounds that are turning a
new generation onto Celtic music
including flute and whistle player
Michael McGoldrick, singer Emily
Smith, and piper Stuart Cassells,
who played in the film "Harry
Potter & The Goblet of Fire," and
has guested on an album from
glam-rockers "The Darkness."

Scottish/ Celtic RadioMusic

Sundays, 12 noon

"Delta Celtica"
Cassie Tobin, host
WEVL-FM 89.9

Sundays, 5:00 p.m.

"The Thistle and Shamrock"
WKNO-FM 91.1

Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.

"Strands of the Celtic Knot"
Robert Campbell, host
WEVL-FM 89.9

Sundays, 6:00 p.m.

"The Thistle & Shamrock,"
WMAV-FM 90.3

October 12 | Thistlepod

The Internet continues to innovate
avenues for distributing and sharing
music. Now we're participating with
"Thistlepod," a free twice-monthly
podcast that previews brand new
releases from Celtic roots (find out
more at thistle.npr.org). Hear the
full versions of stunning vocals and
hot instrumentals recently excerpted
on Thistlepod including those by
Dick Gaughan, The Whistlebinkies,
Susan McKeown, Pete Clark, Kim
Robertson, and the debut by Young
Traditional Musician of the Year,
fiddler Shona Mooney.

October 19 | Celtic Women

Since the dawn of the era of Celtic
compilation albums over a decade
ago, some of the most commercially
successful collections have shone
the spotlight on women artists. We'll
review a few of these this week,
including selections from such best
sellers as "A Woman's Heart,"
"Her Infinite Variety: Celtic Women
in Music and Song," and "Tears of
Stone." The Chieftains praised
collaboration with women.

October 26 | A Celtic Tale

Fiona Ritchie narrates "The
Legend of Deirdre," a tale from
Ireland's ancient cycles of
mythologies. The narration is set
to an original score by Michael
and Jeff Danna, and includes
performances on Celtic harp,
flute, fiddle, whistle, accordion,
mandolin, and Scottish and Irish
Bagpipes.

November 2 | Kate Rusby and John McCusker

Kate Rusby has been called "the
brightest light in English folk
music" (Daily Telegraph) while
her husband John McCusker,
composer, producer and multi-
instrumentalist, is widely regarded
as "a great talent" (Living Tradi-
tion). They are all of these things
and great fun too as you'll find out
when you meet them to hear
about their albums "10" and
"Goodnight Ginger."

Copyright 2006 NPR/Fiona Ritchie



**Clanjamfry
2006
...before the
rains came
and washed
away our
Faire!**

Next Regular Monthly Meeting - Oct. 9th - Dinner Reservations Required 725-1879

Holiday Inn at Poplar and I-240; Dinner at 6:00

Program @ 7:00 Ben Kemker: "If you think you know Andrew, You don't know Jack-son."

Board Meeting, Oct 3rd at 6:30 Shoneys at Summer and Sycamore View

GRACE NOTES

The Memphis Scottish Society, Inc.

P. O. Box 241934

Memphis, TN 38124-1934

