



# The Saltyre

October 2023

## Message From The President

Hello,

It looks like we're sliding into autumn and I am sliding this October edition just under the wire for this month. The days are getting shorter, nights are cooling off, and in just a day or two it will be Halloween.

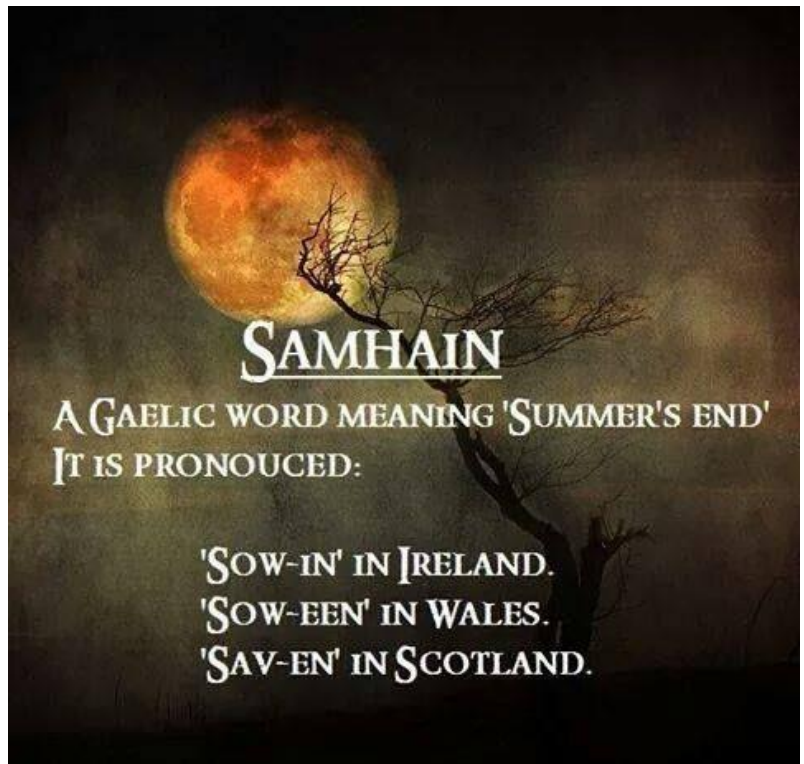
The Investiture of new members is almost upon us. This year it takes place on November 30<sup>th</sup>, St Andrews Day. We have seven new members in the Society this year. I hope all of you that are available will turn out for dinner and welcome the new folks into the Society.

I've received several messages from members saying that they have not received the email invitation to the Investiture from the Society. It should have been received by email on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and October 23<sup>rd</sup>. It's possible that some email systems may have sent it to the spam or junk folder. As a follow up I sent a message on October 24<sup>th</sup> outlining how to register with a check and US Post. Please check those dates if you're wondering about how to register for the Investiture.

On Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup>, I had a chance to drop in at Bill Tubbs's celebration of life. The event was well attended by family and friends. Bill was a father, husband, veteran, musician, race car driver, and many other things. His dry wit, wry smile, and willingness to share a story and a drink will be missed. Bill was a good man. The Society has donated a dozen trees in Bill's name to the Trees for Life reforestation project in Scotland. We have a grove where trees are being planted for fallen brothers of the Society.

Here's to cooler weather and shorter days, all the best,

Bruce Locken





## **Samhain**

Samhain is a pagan religious festival originating from an ancient Celtic spiritual tradition. In modern times, Samhain (a Gaelic word pronounced "SAH-win") is usually celebrated from October 31 to November 1 to welcome in the harvest and usher in "the dark half of the year." Celebrants believe that the barriers between the physical world and the spirit world break down during Samhain, allowing more interaction between humans and denizens of the Otherworld.



Ancient Celts marked Samhain as the most significant of the four quarterly fire festivals, taking place at the midpoint between the fall equinox and the winter solstice. During this time of year, hearth fires in family homes were left to burn out while the harvest was gathered.

After the harvest work was complete, celebrants joined with Druid priests to light a community fire using a wheel that would cause friction and spark flames. The wheel was considered a representation of the sun and used along with prayers. Cattle were sacrificed, and participants took a flame from the communal bonfire back to their home to relight the hearth.

Because the Celts believed that the barrier between worlds was breachable during Samhain, they prepared offerings that were left outside villages and fields for fairies, or Sidhs.

It was expected that ancestors might cross over during this time as well, and Celts would dress as animals and monsters so that fairies were not tempted to kidnap them.



Some specific monsters were associated with the mythology surrounding Samhain, including a shape-shifting creature called a Pukah that receives harvest offerings from the field. The Lady Gwyn is a headless woman dressed in white who chases night wanderers and was accompanied by a black pig.

The Dullahan sometimes appeared as impish creatures, sometimes headless men on horses who carried their heads. Riding flame-eyed horses, their appearance was a death omen to anyone who encountered them.

A group of hunters known as the Faery Host might also haunt Samhain and kidnap people. Similar are the Sluagh, who would come from the west to enter houses and steal souls.

One of the most popular Samhain stories told during the festival was of “The Second Battle of Mag Tuired,” which portrays the final conflict between the Celtic pantheon known as the Tuatha de Danann and evil oppressors known as the Fomor. The myths state that the battle unfolded over the period of Samhain.



One of the most famous Samhain-related stories is “The Adventures of Nera,” in which the hero Nera encounters a corpse and fairies and enter into the Otherworld.

Samhain figured into the adventures of mythological Celtic hero Fionn mac Cumhaill when he faced the fire-breathing underworld dweller Aillen, who would burn down the Hall of Tara every Samhain.

Samhain also figures into another Fionn mac Cumhaill legend, where the hero is sent to the Land Beneath the Wave. As well as taking place on Samhain, it features descriptions of the hero’s holiday gatherings.

As the Middle Ages progressed, so did the celebrations of the fire festivals. Bonfires known as Samhagnans, which were more personal Samhain fires nearer the farms, became a tradition, purportedly to protect families from fairies and witches.

Carved turnips called jack-o-lanterns began to appear, attached by strings to sticks and embedded with coal. Later Irish tradition switched to pumpkins. In Wales, men tossed burning wood at each other in violent games and set off fireworks. In Northern England, men paraded with noisemakers.



The tradition of “dumb supper” began during this time, in which food was consumed by celebrants but only after inviting ancestors to join in, giving the families a chance to interact with the spirits until they left following dinner. Children would play games to entertain the dead, while adults would update the dead on the past year’s news. That night, doors and windows might be left open for the dead to come in and eat cakes that had been left for them.

Neither new holiday did away with the pagan aspects of the celebration. October 31 became known as All Hallows Eve, or Halloween, and contained much of the traditional pagan practices before being adopted in 19th-century America through Irish immigrants bringing their traditions across the ocean.

Trick-or-treating is said to have been derived from ancient Irish and Scottish practices in the nights leading up to Samhain. In Ireland, mumming was the practice of putting on costumes, going door to door and singing songs to the dead. Cakes were given as payment.



Halloween pranks also have a tradition in Samhain, though in the ancient celebration, tricks were typically blamed on fairies.

As Christianity gained a foothold in pagan communities, church leaders attempted to reframe Samhain as a Christian celebration.

The first attempt was by Pope Boniface in the 5th century. He moved the celebration to May 13 and specified it as a day celebrating saints and martyrs. The fire festivals of October and November, however, did not end with this decree. In the 9th century, Pope Gregory moved the celebration back to the time of the fire festivals, but declared it All Saints’ Day, on November 1. All Souls’ Day would follow on November 2.

Courtesy of History.com



## **Gilnockie Tower, Clan Armstrong**



500-years-old it stands in an area known as 'the Debatable Lands', because, in times past, no-one knew if they belonged to England, or to Scotland. Gilnockie Tower dates from the 16th century. It is the ONLY habitable Armstrong tower house still in existence from the original 80 - 90 pele towers in the Eskdale & Liddesdale area. England can be seen from the top of the tower which is situated in a remarkably good defensive position.

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland has extensive archaeological notes on the tower. According to their notes:

*"The Armstrongs first appeared in the district early in the 16th century when the redoubtable Johnnie Armstrong or 'Gilnockie' settled on the church lands at Canonbie and erected this tower at the place called the Hollows."*

*"It was a stronghold of the Armstrongs, and its predecessor, built in 1518, was burnt down by Lord Dacre in 1528."*

The original name of the Tower was the Holehouse; the House by the Hole. The "Hole" was the quarry from which the stone for the building was extracted. This was abbreviated to Hollas by local usage, and modern maps still show the nearby hamlet as Hollows.

The tower is named as Gilnockie Tower, at Holehouse, on late 19th century maps, in 1937 in the Register of Sasines (the land registry) and in the Royal Commissions Survey of 1981 which states '*this oblong tower-house of 16th century date stands to a height of 4 storeys and a garret and bears a beacon-stance on the SSW gable. Attributed to the Armstrongs.*'

Gilnockie Tower was reputedly used on occasions as the headquarters, a meeting place where the resident Border Reivers and their collaborators planned and executed gainful raids within national locale of the Anglo-Scottish Border. An inclusive and extremely dangerous part of day-to-day life in the Esk Valley.



**Flowers of the Forest**

<b>Herman Chambers</b> .....	1930-2020	<b>Daniel Stephens</b>	1911-2003
<b>Clyde Le Roy Scott</b>	1938-2019	<b>David F. McGeary</b>	1940-2002
<b>Malcolm MacClenaghan.</b>	1924-2019	<b>Leroy Coulter Pierson</b>	1913-1999
<b>Alex Doig</b>	1938-2019	<b>Rev. J.P. Edwards III</b>	1925-1997
<b>Gordon Scott</b>	1946-2019	<b>Watson Burns</b>	1996
<b>Alasdair Harding.</b>	2018	<b>James McCracken</b>	1920-1994
<b>Walter (Skip) W. Hastings</b>	1945-2018	<b>Alexander W. McTavish</b>	1906-1992
<b>Calvert Lawton Crawford</b>	1933-2018	<b>Rev. Howard Perry</b>	1921-1989
<b>William Leroy Wilson</b>	1929-2017	<b>Wallace Gibson Holt</b>	1919-1989
<b>Gary D. Stevenson</b>	1949-2017	<b>James C. C. Wallace.</b>	1926-1989
<b>David Mercer</b>	1935-2016	<b>Angus Murray</b>	1984
<b>Charles Preston Thomson</b>	1940-2015	<b>Robert Jeffreys</b>	
<b>Donald Calavan-MacRae</b>	1932-2013	<b>Alec Cowan</b>	
<b>Edison Alva McFarland II –</b>	1925-2012	<b>Tom Ross</b>	
<b>Moton Bryant Holt</b>	1929-2012	<b>Bob MacDonald</b>	
<b>James C "Jim" Richey</b>	1931-2009	<b>Larry Cameron</b>	
<b>George W. Burns</b>	1925-2008	<b>Sherwood "Shakey" Johnson</b>	1925 - 1998
<b>George Eric Martin</b>	1921-2008	<b>Frank M. Clark</b>	
<b>BG Harry McIvor Nicolson</b>	1920-2008	<b>Richard Russo</b>	
<b>Felix D. Othon</b>	1929-2007	<b>William "Bill" Tubbs</b>	1950-2023
<b>William Arnold Butler</b>	1943-2006		
<b>George Santrizos</b>	1914-2005		

The Society donates trees to the Scottish reforestation project on behalf of departed brothers of the Society. Any time you wish you may purchase trees for the reforestation project via this link:

<https://treesforlife.org.uk/plant-trees/grove/5067/>



Charitable giving may help you minimize taxes while supporting the causes that are meaningful to you. Please consider making a donation to the Society when estate planning.



<u>Society Board</u>	<u>Calendar</u>	<u>Society Finances Sept.</u>
<p><b><u>President</u></b>  <u>Bruce Locken</u></p> <p><b><u>Vice President</u></b>  <u>Travis Chatters</u></p> <p><b><u>Treasurer</u></b>  <u>Thomas Melton</u></p> <p><b><u>Secretary</u></b>  <u>Chuck Jamison</u></p> <p><b><u>Directors of the Board</u></b>  <u>Chuck Meng</u>  <u>Doug Walters</u>  <u>Ed Moore</u>  <u>Tim Mihalakos</u></p> <p><b><u>Outreach/Sunshine</u></b>  <u>Bob Wyllie</u></p>	<p>*****</p> <p><b>Nov. Board Meeting .....Nov. 20</b>            Boston's Restaurant            5511 Sunrise Blvd.</p> <p><b>SASS Potluck/bbq.....TBA</b></p> <p><b>Fall Ceilidh.....TBA</b></p> <p><b>Investiture.....Nov. 30</b>            Arden Hilton, 2200 Harvard St.,            Sacramento</p> <p><b>Christmas Party.....Dec. 9</b>            Chuck &amp; Deb' Meng's House</p> <p><b>Burns Supper.....Feb. 3, 2024</b>            North Ridge Country Club</p> <p><b>Spring Tea.....TBA</b></p> <p><b>Dining In/AGM.....May 3, 2024</b></p> <p>Monthly Board Meeting            Third Monday of the month,            Board meeting locations are            currently assigned each month.            We meet for dinner at 6pm and the            Board meeting starts at 7pm,  <b>Open to all members.</b></p>	<p><b>Scholarship fund</b>            .....\$5,098</p> <p><b>Checking</b>            .....\$3,004</p> <p><b>Savings</b>            .....\$24,565</p> <p><b>Brokerage account</b>            .....\$10,000</p> <p><b>Our investment            account base is            \$10,000. Earnings are            put back into the            account. This past            month we earned \$93            and \$781 for our year            to date growth.</b></p> <p><b>Finances published in the            Saltyre may be one to two            months behind current            financial numbers.</b></p>

<https://saintandrewssocietyofsacramento.wildapricot.org>

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