



The East London Caledonian Society

Founded 1876

CHIEF: Roxanne Piderit 082 455 8661
E-mail: roxannepiderit@gmail.com
SECRETARY: Andrew Macdonell 082 701 8868
E-mail: macdonel@iafrica.com

P O Box 19570
TECOMA
EAST LONDON
5214

JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER

Dear Fellow Caledonians,

This should have been the first newsletter from our new Chief, but unfortunately we have still not able to hold our AGM. This may be possible in the coming weeks as the relaxation of the lockdown rules becomes clearer. In lieu of our AGM, the various reports usually presented at the AGM are included with this newsletter.

We had so many plans for 2020, and COVID-19 has certainly derailed these plans. The most disappointing outcome, is the postponement of the Band's Centenary celebration. We know that this will be worth the wait and something to look forward to.

In the meantime, we hope that everyone is keeping safe and well – and that we will be able to meet again soon!

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Yet again there is not much news again this month due to the national lockdown. If there is any news, please send to a committee member for inclusion in the next newsletter.

The Society was deeply saddened to hear of the passing in June of Evelyn Stoddard's father, Prof Will Alexander. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Evelyn, John and their family at this difficult time.

While swimming is still under lock down, Tumi Macdonell received some further recognition for her achievements last season. At the Buffalo City Aquatics 'Virtual' Annual Awards Function (released recently on a Youtube video), Tumi won stroke awards for the 50m and 100m freestyle and was named "Female Swimmer of the Season", as the swimmer with the most FINA points. Tumi has also just been selected for the South African Youth Swimming Squad for 2020/2021. Congratulations, Tumi !

Maureen Rankin has a new email address: rankinmaureen2@gmail.com

And, of course, the big news since the last newsletter and something to cheer the bottle stores are now open !

**LOCKDOWN
ISSUE No 3**



ENTERTAINMENT

No Society Activities or Entertainment scheduled due to lockdown.

AGM postponed indefinitely. AGM will be scheduled once lock down over and restrictions ease. However individual Society Reports for the past year are attached to this newsletter.

PIPE BAND

No formal activities to report. Members have been practicing on their own during lock down.

Centenary Concert officially postponed for a year to October 2021.

LADIES GROUP

The Ladies Group is in recess due to the lockdown.

S.C.D.C

No country dancing during lockdown.

HIGHLAND DANCERS

No face-to-face dancing; but the PhD Dancing Studio has continued with online zoom classes during lockdown.

The South African Virtual Highland Dancing Challenge has been launched – and most dancers have entered and using the break from competition to explore a more creative format. The PhDs Dancers were also asked to participate in an International collaboration, the Hebridean Challenge, where they choreographed new steps for the Highland Fling and created tutorials to teach dancers from around the world the steps. A very exciting opportunity!

CONGRESS

Decision has been taken to officially postpone this year's Congress – it will now be in October 2021 in East London.

BIRTHDAYS

June 2020			July 2020		
Date	Name:	Contact:	Date	Name:	Contact:
11	Jean Sansom		2	Tumi Macdonell	082 386 6845
23	Ralph Anley	082 469 9424	16	Callum MacIver	043 722 0875
			21	Dave Rankin	082 900 0948
			24	Elliot Murray	043 722 4106

COMMITTEE

Committee held another "virtual" Meeting – this time on Whats App on 11 June 2020

Next Virtual Committee Meeting will take place at 19.00 on Thursday 9 July 2020 (whats app or skype TBC)

Finally membership subscriptions for 2020 / 2021 are now due. The Committee has decided to keep the subscription rates unchanged for the coming year, namely: Full Members: R100, Country Members: R75; Junior Members: R35. Subscription notice reminders have been sent out. To those who have paid – thank you!

Yours aye,



Roxanne Piderit (Chief)

Society's Report 2019 - 2020

Fellow Caledonians,

This is certainly not how I anticipated delivering my final report as Chief. This year has turned out to be a challenging year, and I am sure we are all eager to return to some form of normality. As I said in our first lockdown newsletter though – *In the rush to return to normal, let's use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to.* Lockdown has certainly allowed us all plenty of time to reflect. At the beginning of the AGM, we would normally observe a moment of silence in remembrance of our members who have passed away during the year. We may still be able to do so should we hold an AGM in the coming weeks or months, but I feel they deserve recognition in this report. We were sad to note the passing of: Elizabeth Weare and past Chief Ron Milne this year.

It is with mixed-feelings that I present my AGM report to you. We had a busy year pre-lockdown, and had so much more planned before COVID-19 halted everything in its tracks. One of the greatest disappointments is certainly having to postpone the Pipe Band's Centenary concert. This is something we have been working toward with great anticipation. It was a decision we dreaded having to make. I hope there will be an opportunity to celebrate the Centenary (even on a small scale) this year – and that the concert next year will be worth the wait. We were also meant to host the Congress of the Federated Caledonian Society of South Africa in October. Regrettably this has also had to be postponed. We will instead host the Concert and Congress in October 2021.

As I have said in both of my previous reports, while our membership may be small, I truly believe that the spirit of our society proves that alone we can do so little, together we can do so much. Looking back on the activities of the society over the last year, we have certainly accomplished a lot (even with COVID-19 cancelling our last few events). We started the year with a community-focus and met at Nahoon Beach for a beach clean-up in July in honour of Mandela Day. This was followed by the Chairing and Kirking held at Hams Club and Amalinda Baptist Church respectively in August. In September a very successful fundraising tea was held. Past Federation Chief Sandra Rankin and the members of the band are to be complimented on hosting a very enjoyable morning. A number of members also travelled to Grahamstown in September to support the St Andrew's Gathering.

Also in September, the East London Caledonian Society made their presence known in Bloemfontein for the annual Congress of the Federated Caledonian Society of Southern Africa. This was a historic Congress, as changes proposed by our society came into effect. This meant that Nookie Middleton and Rose Thompson stepped out of their office as the last Provincial Chieftain and Lady President of the Cape Province. In place of the Provincial Chieftains, a single National Chieftain and Lady President were installed for the first time – mom and myself. This is an honour which we do not take lightly. Our annual outing in October to McClelland for Halloween saw us raise a reasonable amount. Our St Andrews Dinner was unfortunately not well supported in November, but we are aware that this date competes with numerous end of year commitments. Several ideas have been bandied about in terms of how to overcome this. We did manage to raise the Saltire at City Hall as has been customary – and received the attention of the Buffalo City Tourism department which covered the event on their social media pages. Unfortunately, as our Honorary Chaplain was in the process of relocating we were unable to have a St Andrews Service, and instead held a morning of fellowship at the Chief's House after the Chief and Lady President represented the Society at the Honorary Chaplain's final service at Amalinda Baptist Church. This year started off with two fabulous events. Burns Night was held at Old Selbornian Club and was an enjoyable evening, with Past Federation Chief Sandra Rankin organising a very interesting programme to give us new insights into Scotland's Bard. Then, the Rankin Family again took the lead for the Treasure Hunt in February - making most of us feel pretty simple searching for obscure clues around Vincent Park.

In March we celebrated International Bagpipe day with the ever-popular Nahoon River Barge Cruise. I am disappointed that I could not join in on what turned out to be our final event for 2020 due to commitments on the dancing calendar. A final unofficial outing was Music in the Park – before the President's announcement of a national lockdown brought our entertainment calendar to a halt. The COVID-19 lockdown led to the cancellation of the much anticipated Tartan Day Train Trip and Whisky Tasting planned for World Whisky

Day. We were pleased that some members were able to contribute “virtually” on both these occasions – wearing and sharing Tartan on Tartan Day and a wee dram on World Whisky Day. I am sure we would all much rather have spent these occasions together. Dave Rankin also provided a challenging “Loch” Down quiz which had many of us employing the services of Mr Google.

As mentioned last year we made use of, or planned to use, notable days such as international bagpipe day and world whisky day. I think we can continue to leverage these linkages going forward. It is unfortunately still apparent, especially during the lockdown, that we are lacking news from the members. We really do want to hear your news, and get your input on events and ideas for events. So please make contact with the committee.

While each of the sections of the society have their own reports, please allow me a few moments for my own comments and notes (and this may once again be repetitive of my thanks given in previous years, but as this is my final report as Chief, thanks need to be extended to these important role players):

1. The Pipe Band has had a very busy year and they continue to be the flag ship of our society. My grateful thanks to Honorary Piper Robert Rankin and the members of the ELCS Pipe Band for their willingness to play at all Caledonian events – it was certainly encouraging to have a notably larger contingent at the first outing of their Centenary Year (Burns Nicht). We look forward to celebrating the band centenary next year.
2. The highland dancers are also always willing to entertain at the various society functions and accompany the band to many of the parades. A big thank you to the teachers, dancers and parents who give up their time for these events. The dancers are using the lockdown period to learn exciting new choreographies and broaden their range of skills – we hope these will provide entertainment in the post-corona world.
3. The Ladies Group remains active – and I would like to thank Sandra for again taking the lead. My thanks to the Ladies group for their contributions to the various events this year.
4. Our Country Dancers continue to thrive – and despite their own objections, do reflect well on the active nature of our society, and we are grateful for their additions to the entertainment programmes of our events.

Again, I do need to thank those who I have worked closely with over the last three years as Chief (in no particular order):

1. My Lady President – thank you for the hours you have put in and for picking up the slack when my work pressures (or moving house) got in the way.
2. To my Chief of Protocol, Sandra – thank you for the endless hours you have put in, for all the advice and encouragement you have given me, and for passing on your invaluable knowledge. I honestly could not have survived these years without you. I look forward to many years learning under your guidance.
3. To our Honorary Secretaries during my terms of office, Dave Rankin and Andrew Macdonell – the efficiency with which you perform these tasks is appreciated.
4. Our Honorary Treasurer, Sheila Godfrey for handling our finances so well. Likewise to our Honorary Auditor John Stoddard for his work.
5. The Chieftains and Committee – for their hard work and support over the years.
6. We have regrettably had a number of Honorary Chaplains over my terms of office, all have served us well. My grateful thanks to the late Honorary Chaplain Des Plint, former Honorary Chaplain Cheryl Adams and Honorary Chaplain Paul Taylor.

It is very difficult to capture the spirit of this society in a few words – but in summary, thank you for the privilege to serve the Society as Chief over the past three years. Thank you for your support and encouragement. To the incoming Chief and Committee, I wish you well, and may our Society continue to grow from strength to strength.

Roxanne Piderit
Chief

Ladies Group 2019 - 2020

Despite the curtailment of activities due to the Corona lockdown in March of this year, the ladies were able to enjoy a varied and enjoyable programme of events in the preceeding months.

A presentation of the Edinburgh Tattoo 2018, brought in a welcome sum toward the Pipe Band Centenary Fund, and a donation of cash and baby clothes was delivered to Breath of Life from a previous fund-raising event.

A visit to the East London Aquarium provided a delightful opportunity to view the exhibits, watch the animals being fed and hear an informative presentation by the Superintendant of the Aquarium, before relaxing in the tranquil surroundings with our picnic tea.

Lorna and John Thompson once again provided their home and culinary skills to make our Christmas Lunch a sumptuous occasion, clocking up ten years in memory of her mother Pat Johnson. With plans to move to a Retirement Centre this year, we wish them every happiness in their new home.

December brought our more elderly Caledonian Members together, to be treated to a delicious tea and a morning of chatter and reminiscences.

An early celebration of Maureen Illingworth's 96th birthday in February, also served as a farewell as she left to join her family who had relocated to Natal. Our fondest memories and good wishes go with her.

Shortly before the lockdown, a start was made on gift items for this year's Congress. Needless to say, that has had to be put on hold, but we are looking forward to taking up the task again in the near future.

Dot.Com Cafe remains a favourite destination as well as members' homes where we are able to share much happy fellowship.

We were deeply saddened by the passing of our Elizabeth Weare during this year. A dedicated and enthusiastic Caledonian, she is sorely missed by us all.

Congratulations to our new octogenarians, Maureena Middleton and Rose Thompson who celebrated their birthdays in March and April respectively, and to Sheila Sanderson who will join their ranks in June.

We look forward to a blessed and productive year ahead.

Sandra Rankin
Chairman
Ladies Group

Country Dancers 2019 - 2020

Report not available at time of printing.

East London Caledonian Society Pipe Band Report 2019 - 2020

The East London Caledonian Society Pipe Band has finally reached its centenary year.

The 2019 / 2020 year began with much hope and enthusiasm as we prepared to celebrate our centenary. We did play for some of the society functions such as the Chairing of the Chief, St Andrew's Dinner and some centenary fund raising events. We also made our annual appearance at Music in the Park which was very well received.

Further events were planned but the arrival of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown has brought these activities to a halt and has resulted in the much anticipated centenary celebration concert being delayed until 2021. This of course gives us the opportunity to host an even better event. Several of our piping and drumming friends from other bands have expressed a keen desire to be part of this concert when it does take place. One of the features of this concert will be a medley of tunes composed entirely by past and present members of our own band. While we are unable to host our regular practices or go out to perform members are still practicing at home as well as taking advantage of some online tutoring. One of the initiatives during the lockdown has been for members to post their private performances on the bands Whatsapp group which has been a great way to build up confidence. We also recently launched a Facebook page specifically for the band which has brought some positive results. Even during the lockdown we have managed to attract some new prospective learners which gives us a lot of hope for when we emerge into the new normal.

Rob Rankin
Pipe Major
ELCS Pipe Band

Eastern Cape Highland Gathering Report 2019 - 2020

Since the 2016 Gathering held in East London, the ECHG has faced many challenges. Cape Town Caledonian Society and Port Elizabeth Scottish Association have left the Federation and also the 3-Society rotation for hosting the Gathering. Regrettably East London Caledonian Society is not in a position to host the ECHG on an annual basis.

Adding to the challenges, the Knysna Celtic Fest at the beginning of the competition season and the St Andrews College Gathering at the end of season both show sign of remaining as fixtures on the calendar.

Over the past year, ECHG funds and planning have been channelled towards events scheduled for 2020: the 96th Congress of the Federated Caledonian Society of Southern Africa and the Centenary Concert to celebrate the 100th birthday of East London Caledonian Society Pipe Band. Like every other activity, these have been suspended by the Corona virus lockdown. Congress and concert have been rescheduled from the weekend of 10 October 2020 to the weekend of 9 October 2021. While the postponement is disappointing, it is temporary and the final result will be worth the wait.

Looking beyond 2021, we must consider that Societies, Pipe Bands and Highland Dancing Studios now operate in a world very different to the colonial era in which they began. The Eastern Cape Highland Gathering began in 1949, to encourage the development of piping and dancing in the Eastern Cape. Our difficult decision is whether we can sustainably restructure the ECHG to continue to encourage development, or whether the events in October 2021 will be the Gathering's swansong.

Please give this your serious consideration and assist your committee in planning the road ahead.

Dave Rankin
Convenor