



WALLACE 700 ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2007

WALLACE COMMEMORATION CEREMONY.

THIS year's celebration will take place on Sunday 2nd September with a start time of 13.00 hours. Last year we were unable to hold the Schools Pageant as the time between pupils returning from summer holidays and the Ceremony was too short to allow for rehearsals, and this new date should ease that problem. Ferryhill and Albyn primary Schools have agreed to share the Charles Barron script between them. The new date is the day after the Annual Braemar gathering and with more visitors already in the area we would expect a greater number of spectators. One additional bonus could come from the Oil Industry as their bi-annual exhibition starts in the same week as the Ceremony. One piece of bad news is that due to new legislation there will have to be changes to the Procession Route as we will be unable to use Union Street. If this is the case then it is more than likely we will follow the route used at last years procession, when the inclement weather forced us to shorten the Procession.



AFTER last years clean up of the statue, the City Council in consultation with Heraldic Scotland, embarked on a commendable upgrade of the area by highlighting the intricate heraldic symbols within the wrought iron fencing. On the left we have one of the many painted= panels and on the right, Josh Wright singing "Scots Wha Hae" at the statue.



LAST year before the ceremony we had a short play written by Charles Barron, on the coronation of Robert the Bruce. This year we mark the 100th anniversary of Mary Slessor's last visit to Scotland, paying tribute to one of Scotland's and possibly the world's greatest heroines, Mary was born in December 1848, in the Denburn, within sight of the Wallace Statue. Daughter of a Shoemaker and a deeply religious mother she started work at the age of eleven in a mill in Dundee. She was hired as a "half-timer" which meant that half of her day was spent at school, paid for by the mill owners and the other half in productive employment at the mill. By the age of 14 Mary was a skilled Jute worker, with her day starting at 5 am with housework, This was followed by a 12 hour shift at the mill with only an hours break for breakfast and lunch. This was a harsh working environment which prepared her for the arduous life to come. Through her interest in the Church, she



became fascinated by the accounts of work in Calabar, now part of Nigeria. and decided to offer her services to the Foreign Mission Board and in August 1876 at the age of 28 sailed to Africa to start her missionary work in Calabar. Mary spent the rest of her life in Africa working with the peoples of west Africa where she is still remembered. Mary was so highly regarded by the Africans that when she died in 1915 she was accorded a state funeral and her grave is marked with an imposing cross of Scottish granite. Mary was known as the "White Queen of Calabar" but more simply to her friends whom she worked amongst as "Ma". Mike Gibb and Mairi Paton have written a play "Mother of all the Peoples" on her life and a shortened version will be presented before the ceremony. The introduction of themes such as this have provided each of the ceremonies with a fresh approach and added colour to the Ceremony and the Processions. Another anniversary this year is that 200 years ago on the 20th March 1807, both the British Parliament and the U.S. Congress voted in favour of the abolition of the African Slave trade. This can be linked to both Mary Slessor and to William Wallace in the search for freedom and it is also interesting to note that amongst the prominent campaigners for the Abolition in the U.K., was a Glasgow philosopher of law, George Wallace.



THE 2007 COMMEMORATION CEREMONY ON SUNDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER.

ABERDEEN HIGHLAND GAMES at HAZLEHEAD on SUNDAY 17th JUNE

WALLACE 700 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

As usual the business was dealt with in a quick and efficient manner and with all the office bearers re-elected there was little more to discuss. Dr. Henry Sifton continues as convenor, with Eric White his deputy, John Mackay, the Secretary and David Irvine, Treasurer. The current Council members are; Gordon Casely, Peter Macari, Irene Fumeaux, Jennifer Leighton, Ken Irons, Isobelle Fenwick, Barbara-Anne Burnett, Jennifer Bain, Margaret Viera, James Allison, Major Mike Tait, Helena Anderson-Wright, Ron Ferrari, Allan H Mair and Craig Pike. To complete the evening there was a delightful buffet with light refreshments to settle us down nicely for Gordon Casely's Talk. Gordon started by outlining how and why St. Columba came to Scotland. From there he took us through the early life of Queen Margaret, second wife of King Malcolm III and from this went on to present his own reasoning as to how she may have been influential on St Andrew replacing St. Columba as our Patron Saint. He finished by illustrating just how St. Andrew is all around us in our daily life, appearing on Heraldry and Army Badges, as well as Bank and church furnishings. His name is used in Street names and buildings and is carried by over 600 St. Andrews societies all over the world.



Isobelle Fenwick with her Gonfannon ready for the start of the procession

DURING Gordon Casely's talk he referred to the Breckennoch as one of Scotland's oldest and probably Least known relics. Also known as the Monymusk Reliquary it is carved from a solid piece of wood and covered in bronze and silver plates carved with animals. It is decorated with bronze medallions bordered on a red glaze. The Breckennoch is closely linked to St Columba and it is believed that St Eunan a biographer of St. Columba took it to the Church of Forglen in Banffshire which he founded. It is believed that the Abbot of Arbroath used the



Breckennoch to bless the Scottish Army before the battle of Bannockburn in 1314., when Robert the Bruce defeated the English. It is also believed to have once contained some bones of St Columba, or have been a gift from the Saint himself. Over the centuries there have been many custodians namely the Irvines of Drum, the Urries, the Fraser's, the Forbeses and finally the Grants. It is now housed in the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. The name Breckennoch translates in Gaelic as both "the blessed shrine" or the "speckled peak one".

Breac means either house-shaped or speckled, referring to its ornamental appearance and Bennoch means blessed.

THIS YEARS COUNCIL MEETING DATES HAVE BEEN FIXED FOR THE FOLLOWING DATES.

MARCH: 14TH.

APRIL 18TH.

MAY 14TH.

AUGUST 22ND.

THE FINAL REDD UP MEETING FOR THE YEAR WILL BE HELD ON THE 17TH SEPTEMBER. ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD IN THE OFFICES OF IAIN SMITH & CO, 18/20 QUEENS ROAD, ABERDEEN, UNLESS OTHERWISE ADVISED. OUR MEETINGS ARE ALWAYS OPEN AND AN INVITATION EXTENDED TO ANY PERSON WHO FEEL THEY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE PLANNING OR ASSIST IN ANY WAY. VISITORS ARE ALWAYS GIVEN A WARM WELCOME.



AS always we have enclosed a gentle reminder in the shape of a renewal form for those who have yet to renew their subscription. Your continued support and siller is much appreciated. Donations please to John Mackay.

THERE are still a few copies of the Wallace 700 DVD available at a cost of £10.00 including postage. There are also some Coasters, Key rings, Fridge Magnets and notelets available. Contact John Mackay 6 Cairn Walk Cults Aberdeen AB15 9TF TEL. 01224 861345 or e-mail john-mackay@2.com

THE Wallace 700 Association is a non-political Charitable body registered Charity No. SC0034208] which exists to advance the education of the public about the life of William Wallace. Donations are always welcome and membership can be obtained by contacting John Mackay at the address shown elsewhere in this newsletter letter Contact can also be made through the web site www.wallace700.org provided by Iain Smith & Co.