

St. Andrews Society of NW Michigan
The Northern Thistle
November 2017



Friday, December 1 – St Andrews Day Potluck Dinner;
Grace Episcopal Church, Traverse City – 5:00.

Friday, January 26 – Annual Robert Burns Night – details soon

Sunday, April 8 – Spring get together (date tentative)



SAS and Presbyterian Church members were smartly dressed for Reformation Sunday and Scottish luncheon on Oct 29. L-R Marge Eckert, Wally Skinner and Kathy Minick.

Travels With The McColls Chapter 3: Falkirk Wheel

In the middle of the Scottish Lowlands is the old industrial town of Falkirk. (lit. speckled [stone] church). William Wallace and Bonnie Prince Charlie both fought battles there, though about 450 years apart. The Duke of Wellington while fighting Napoleon remarked that he wanted all his cannons to be cast at the local foundry.

Like many towns, it has an old pub with a sign saying that Rabbie Burns stayed there, so it must be genuine. Not many tourists came to see the sign, so the community decided on something different. They developed a new park with a tribute to the Industrial Age.

249 years ago work started on a 35-mile canal to connect the Forth and Clyde Rivers. It was not finished until 1790. This allowed improved transportation between the east and west coasts, including fishing boats moving to different fishing shoals.

Between 1789 and 1803 the canal was used for [William Symington's](#) steamboat trials, culminating in the Charlotte Dundas, the "first practical steamboat" built at the shipyard in Grangemouth by Alexander Hart.

In 1822 The Union Canal opened connecting Edinburgh with Falkirk, mostly to carry minerals such as coal. Although it did not have locks on the main stretch, there was a 110- foot drop to connect to the Forth and Clyde Canal.

Passenger boats ran on the canal from 1783, and in 1809 fast boats were introduced, running from Edinburgh to Falkirk in 3 hours 30 minutes, providing such creature comforts as food, drink and newspapers.

Canals started losing their popularity in the 1840's when railways were developed. Within a hundred years they were out of use, and in the second half of the 20th Century, other infrastructure projects removed parts of the canal system. Then someone had the bright idea of recreation on the water, which brings us back to the idea of a new park.

Regarding the 110-foot drop between the two canals, the old locks were long since removed. What were the leisure boaters to do? Can't have the kayakers portaging, can we? Now, the Soo Locks only have a drop of 21 feet. How many locks would be needed for five times that drop? Here, the spirit of Scottish engineering was rejuvenated and the Falkirk Wheel was developed, a 100-foot high revolving boat lift!

Imagine a barge full of tourists sailing along the canal and the boat goes into what seems like a bathtub. The end closes up and it really is a tub. A wheel turns and the boat is either lowered or raised to the other part of the canal. The end opens and the boat continues on its way. Modern Engineering! The day we visited, tourists were lined up to experience the event.

Photo of the Falkirk Wheel:



Chapter 4: The Kelpies

Scotland is a land of mysterious presences. Do you recall references to Auld Nick in Tam o' Shanter, stories and photos of Nessie, the ghost of The Auld Man o' the Tay or countless faerie stories? There are also the Kelpies, sometimes known as Water Kelpies, a water spirit that sometimes takes the form of man or horse on land. The name Kelpies was given to some new statues built to commemorate the working horse. The steam era may be 200 years old, but horsepower was used long before and long into the steam era: (Coal) Pit Ponies, Barge, Cart and Plough Horses. They had a long and noble, though often abused history.

The Kelpies were commissioned to acknowledge the work of the horse. Designed by Andy Scott, they were built in 2013. They are 100 feet high and only show the head and shoulders of the horse. There are two of them, one looking down, and the other looking up. They're metal, but light passes through. They are permanently situated at the new park in Falkirk. (Well, you did not expect 300 tons, plus their bases to be mobile).

Trying to view them, we could not find parking but we did see them as we drove along the motorway. All was not lost though. There are a couple sets of maquettes, (scale models) only 10 feet tall (plus a base) that travel the world. This summer, one set was on display in St. Andrews.



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St. Andrews Society of Northern Michigan Membership Form

The SASNM is a non-profit organization founded in 1997. Annual dues are \$20 per household. Please send checks to SASNM, PO Box 2303, TC 49685.

Name(s) _____ Clan _____

Home Phone # _____ Cell _____

Address (if new member)

Email address (if new)

We look forward to your participation. {If you are renewing, a big thank you as well.} We look forward to seeing you at the next gathering and will alert you of upcoming events through our newsletter and Emails.