



The Caledonian

Nov-Dec 2025

Published by The Caledonian Society of Hawaii

Recap of the Caledonian Society's 60th Anniversary

On November 8, 2025, the Society met for the final celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Caledonian Society. We met at the Pacific Club on Queen Emma St. Not only is the Club the oldest private club in Hawaii, it's also on the site of the former home of Scotsman Archibald Cleghorn, husband of Princess Miriam Likelike and father of Princess Ka'iulani. **Hardy Spoehr** gave an accounting of the history of the Pacific Club and the Cleghorn effect on Hawaii's history. We hope his speech and others will be available on the website www.scotsinhawaii.org.

Elspeth Kerr (below) spoke of her first memories of the Society in 1965 with her mother, Helen Cantlay, who was a founding member.



It was held at the "old House Without a Key. The only speaker I remember was the visiting professor from Scotland—who my mother told us was the catalyst that got the Society going. He was on leave from the Univ. of Edinburgh, teaching at UH Manoa." His speech concluded "with requesting us 'all to be upstanding' as we toasted Scotland—the first time I had ever heard that particular introduction to a toast." Her other favorite at the Ilikai was "the wonderful food" and especially "their skill at making trifle for dessert. It was absolutely delicious."

She attended early Burns Dinners held at the Ilikai Hotel (and many since then too) and the 1975 Highland Games held at the Hawaii Prep Academy in Waimea on the Big Island. Over the 60 years of the Society, we can count on Elspeth attending as many events of the Society as possible and retelling stories of the past.

Chieftain Bruce McEwan told more of the story of the Society's beginnings: Incorporated in 1965, then became a 501c(3) in 1994 with Chieftain Don McNeil leading the way. The organizations of the St. Andrews Society of Hawaii (SASH), the Royal Country Dance Society, Hawaii Branch (RSCDS), and the Hawaiian Scottish Association (HSA) all were started by members of the Caledonian Society. The Celtic Pipes and Drums of Hawaii also began with many members of the Society. Over the years there have been other changes for the Society. Various venues for the Burns Dinner: the Ilikai, the Japanese Cultural Center, the Elks Club, the Oahu Country Club, the Hawaii Convention Center, and again the Oahu Country Club (see reservation form for 2026 on the separate flyer).

Vice Chieftain Susan MacKinnon reported on the Scottish Education Research Grant (SERG). It started in 1990 as the AYE scholarship—Award for Youth Education—with a \$150 award available to those 18-23 years old. In 2007 the name was changed to the Scottish Education Research Grant and opened to anyone 18 years and older, a US citizen and resident of Hawaii. It also provides up to \$2000 for the grant.

The Celtic Pipes & Drums of Hawaii began the evening with a rousing repertoire of Scottish music with over 12 members attending.

After dinner our SERG recipient **Holly Braffet**, went over her process for identifying landscapes of old Scottish artists, sketching the area in Scotland & then painting pictures using techniques she discovered while looking at the original pictures.

(Holly Braffet)

Fiddler **Lisa Gomes and Jason VanSteenwyk** entertained us with lively Scottish music. Thank you to everyone who helped organize this event and participated.

See more pictures from the evening in this newsletter



The Robert Burns Dinner. Sunday, January 25, 2026

This is the 230th anniversary of the death of the Scottish Bard. See details in this newsletter.

Chieftain's Column: *From the Craig*



Mahalo to everyone who attended our 60th Anniversary Celebration Dinner of November 8th. The importance of The Caledonian Society in our community was highlighted. The members who related their personal stories were inspiring. The value of our SERG support was clearly evident in the report from our newest recipient, Holly Braffet. Of course, the Celtic Pipes & Drums of Hawaii got us started with their rousing set. The music from Lisa Gomes and her musical partner Jason VanSteenwyk got us thinking of our Scottish roots and finished our evening in the traditional way. I believe that every member who attended should be proud of what The Caledonian Society of Hawaii has accomplished in our 60 years and proud that they are members. Slàinte, Bruce

Member News

November Birthdays Jill Ackerman, Holly Braffet, Faith Burns, Linda Campbell, Lillian Cunningham, Elspeth Kerr, Jim Redmond, Karen Thompson, and Helen Wynn.

December Birthdays Joshua Beem, John Dooher, Reiko Harris, Aric Harris, Susan MacKinnon, Larry Phillips, Jane Redmond, and Mark Reed.

Note: If your birthday is in November or December, and you don't see your name listed here, we probably don't have it in our database. We want to celebrate your special month too, so please contact Kevin Campbell Bogan at 808-778-4697 or by email at kevin.bogan@gmail.com

Events Calendar for 2025-2026

(Subject to change)

2025

Saturday, December 27: Hogmanay celebration, possible Trolley ride / Train ride **TBD**.

SUNDAY, January 25, 2026: Burns Night, Oahu Country Club, 5:00-9:30 pm.

Saturday, February 21: Scots - Irish Immigration talk presented by Kevin Bogan. Hybrid meeting, Venue TBD, 5:00-7:00 pm.

Saturday, March 21: Movie Night with potluck dinner, Venue TBD.

Saturday, April 25: Zoom: "Important Kings & Queens of Scotland". 5:30 pm

SUNDAY, May 24: Music Workshop with Lisa Gomes instructing. Venue and timing to be arranged.

Saturday, June 20: Society Annual General Meeting, possible BBQ social. Venue TBD. Possible talk on Tartans and Kilts.

Hawaiian Scottish Association Festival cancelled for 2026. In order to be able to provide a better festival, the HSA has decided to postpone the 2025 Highland Festival & Games for one year.

The Galway Bay Celtic Music Feis

From Lisa Gomes

The town of Ocean Shores is on the coast of northwest Washington State, near the Canadian border. Known for great fishing and seafood restaurants, it is also proud to host the annual Galway Bay Celtic Music Feis the second week of October. The main activities of the festival are divided between two venues: the Galway Bay Irish pub and the Convention Center, less than a mile away. Between the two venues, there

were 10 stages for 20 bands to perform. I was very honored to be invited to accompany our friends Bill and Dorothy Mullen from Dundee, Scotland. Bill has performed at this festival for several years and is a well-known favorite who sings mostly Scottish folksongs and his originals, with a few Irish rebel songs here and there.

It was a very challenging and energetic six days! Bill performed at least 2 times per day and promised everyone a different set list for each performance. I knew some songs but



did have to learn several new Scottish songs. I'm happy to report that I have those songs under my belt and plan to introduce some of them to Caledonians in May for a musical participation event. Dorothy provided beautiful harmonies and melodies on several songs. Some of these were "Campbelton Loch," "Wark o' the Wellies," "When the Yellow's on the Broom," "I Belong to Glasgow," and many more. A big hit was Bill's newest song, "Dark Loch Ness" and, of course, "Big Tam" complete with kazoo orchestra accompaniment!

It was also very nice to have a Hawai'i contingent at the Feis, including Linda Ross (and her sister, Diane), Nancy Smiley, Bill Comerford, and Nicole Wilder. I hope some of you might consider this low-key and very fun event in the future!

For more fun and music, be sure to catch Bill and Dorothy on their LiveStream, second Sunday morning of every month (<https://www.bill-mullen.com>).

The Falls of Clyde: A Personal Story by Chieftain Bruce McEwan

In January 2008, Heather MacGregor contacted me as Chieftain of The Caledonian Society to tell me that Bishop Museum was giving up the historic ship *Falls of Clyde*. The Caledonian Society had a long history of holding events aboard the ship and performing volunteer work to maintain her. I wrote a letter on behalf of our Society to question what was happening. In a belated response, Tim Johns, then president of Bishop Museum, said that they could not afford the cost of maintaining the ship, but were looking to see if another museum would take ownership.

Fast forward several months and I was again called by Heather. Bishop Museum had hired a firm to derig the ship and apparently planned to have her removed from the harbor. I began working with a small community group that hoped to see what could be done to save the ship. During discussions in the summer of 2008 with Bishop Museum and the Coast Guard, we became aware that the museum had already engaged a local maritime company to remove the ship and sink her. Fortunately, we had a resource who knew historic preservation regulations, and we discovered that the museum had not advised the Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) that the *Falls* was an historic ship with federal protection against arbitrary destruction. This ended the museum's plan and got them to negotiate a change of ownership.

On September 30, 2008, the newly formed nonprofit Friends of Falls of Clyde, Inc. (FOFC) took ownership and stewardship of *Falls of Clyde*, the last four-masted, iron-hull sailing oil tanker in the world with a long history of an amazing sailing career starting from her launch on December 12, 1878. The mission of FOFC was simple: to preserve and restore this unique historic ship. We were aided initially by the State Harbors Division by getting a gratis Revocable Permit to remain berthed at Pier 7 in Honolulu Harbor. A financial benefit came from Bishop Museum, which had received a donation of \$500,000 from Bobby Pfeiffer of Matson Navigation for the maintenance of the ship, so the balance of \$475,000 was transferred to FOFC. I was named president and chief spokesperson for FOFC and we looked forward to a bright future, although we understood that historic preservation was a daunting project.



Falls of Clyde in Honolulu Harbor 2008; Wikipedia

As a prudent steward of an historic vessel, we spent several years understanding what preservation meant and the details for restoration. We worked with experts and by 2014 we were prepared to begin the major work. We hired an experienced naval engineering and architectural firm in 2013 to survey the ship and prepare an initial drydock plan. As a board, we also developed a business plan with financial estimates based on data from the Hawaii Maritime Center, which is where *Falls of Clyde* had been a major attraction. Our plan was straight-forward, the ship would go into drydock for hull preservation and then restoration would begin in phases starting with the main deck and cabins. It was made clear that the plan was contingent upon completion of the drydock and the phased restoration would take a decade or more. Our engineering firm had negotiated with Pacific Shipyard for the drydock at just under \$1,000,000, so we had a target for a capital fundraising goal.

Our bright future and solid plans began to crack and crumble beginning at the end of 2014 with a change in the State Administration. In November 2014, we were contacted by the Department of Transportation wanting to know our plans. While this seemed a bit ominous, we provided the drydock and business plans as requested. We received no response to either submission. A change at the Harbors Division in 2015 made it clear that the State's support, or at least not previously making any negative statements, was at an end. The "attack" came with comments from the new Deputy Director that the ship was now a hazard to the harbor and questioned FOFC's ability to carry out our mission. We refuted the safety hazard allegation by providing survey reports and pointing out that since 2008 the ship had been moored with lines configured to withstand a hurricane. This plan had been filed with both the Harbors Division and U.S. Coast Guard, with no questions asked. Our own maritime experts advised us that the State's allegation based on their theory that a hurricane would drag the ship from its mooring and somehow have it drift into the shipping lane in the harbor was not logical. Besides ignoring our surveys showing the ship's integral strength, they never provided any engineering evidence to support their position, but even today they used the safety hazard as their justification for the removal.

Things came to a head in 2016. In May the Harbors Division, using the terms of our Revocable Permit, ordered the ship to be removed within 30 days. Of course, this was impossible, so they impounded her in June. We appealed and went to arbitration, where the State chose the arbitrator and FOFC lost and appealed to the Director of Transportation, who had set up the arbitration, so we had the same result. The only positive aspect of the move was that the State then had responsibility for the ship, although they allowed FOFC to continue with our weekly maintenance schedule. This occurred without our knowing what the future would hold.

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Falls of Clyde Continued

That future got uglier in 2019. Harbors Division tried to auction off the ship and required a new owner to remove her from the harbor. No takers. However, Harbors Division then banned FOFC from continuing our work on the basis that the ship was unsafe. After 11 years of weekly work on the ship, it now was too unsafe for us, who knew the ship better than anyone. They hired someone to look after the ship, but when I asked for reports similar to the ones we kept, there were none.

In 2016, after the impoundment, we were contacted by a Scot in Glasgow, David O'Neill. He introduced himself as someone interested in historic preservation and saw that we needed help. He proposed to have the *Falls* returned to Glasgow and led us to believe that he could get local support for a return. For two years he attempted to put together a heavy-lift ship project to pick up the *Falls* and carry her to Scotland. However, it became evident that he had no financial backing to fund the project. He then had the idea to convert the ship to an eco-friendly vessel with solar panel sails. Presumably in the hope that he could sell the idea to financial backers. He still had that idea in mind when in 2022 the State put out an RFP (request for proposal) to remove the ship. While FOFC supported her return to Scotland as the best option to save her, we were not actively involved with Save Falls of Clyde International, as O'Neill called this phase of his plan. He got the bid which was withdrawn in 2023 by Harbors Division based on a misunderstanding about the requirements to be met by the contractor.

With again a change in the administration, we had a new Deputy Director, with whom we could communicate, but with the knowledge that the goal was still the removal of the ship and the repetition of the still unproven allegation of the ship's safety hazard, although it was easier to sell to the public because of the years that the ship was not maintained. The strategy was to remove her Historic Landmark status at the State and Federal levels in order to remove the federal regulations that would hamper their ability to have a National Historic Landmark destroyed. There was little FOFC could do to prevent their action, but I submitted testimony at the August 2023 State meeting and introduced the idea that if the ship was to be removed a commemorative exhibit was needed so that the memory and importance of *Falls of Clyde* would not be lost. However, the most important part of the testimony was that the State had failed to provide FOFC the 45-day notice in advance of the meeting. The decision to remove the ship's historic status was taken off the agenda. Although a small victory, it only stalled the inevitable decision.

We waited anxiously for the notice of the next meeting in order to be present. However, no notice was received. In January 2024, a letter dated October 1st giving notice of a November 2023 meeting arrived in our P.O. Box. During the period that had elapsed, the State removed the ship's State Historic Landmark status, and a formal notice was sent to the federal level for the final step. I tried to argue that the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) and the committee that voted to remove the historic status were well aware the FOFC had participated before, and that when we didn't reply to the notice of the second meeting they should have made an attempt to find out why. My attempts to get a response were ignored, and I had to go to the State Ombudsman Office. I heard nothing until June 2024 when I received an apologetic email and a promise to follow through with our idea for the commemorative exhibit.

It was December 2024 before there was another contact and more delays until February 2025. The bureaucratic wheels turn slowly and the people working on this project have only met twice. I am working with the Harbors Deputy Director, the SHPD Deputy Director and the Executive Director of the Historic Hawaii Foundation. I find it ironic that the *Falls of Clyde* is no longer in Honolulu Harbor but lying at the bottom of the sea. And now the State seems to take credit for the idea I made of a commemorative exhibit. This will most likely be at the renovated Aloha Tower, which will be 100 years old in 2026. There will be a need to work closely with the State to see that there is a proper testimonial to the importance of a very unique ship, *Falls of Clyde*.

Picture from the BBC 10/15/2025



Falls of Clyde was towed out of Honolulu Harbour at dawn and scuttled in deep water

The last 17 ½ years have been a rollercoaster for me as the hopes we had in 2008 and the plans we laid were eroded over the years. Knowing that the loss of the ship could have been avoided if Bishop Museum had done its work and taken the ship into drydock. Or, if the State, which enjoyed being known for support of historic preservation, would have supported FOFC when we provided our plan for preservation and restoration. Over those many years, it was an honor for those of us who worked aboard *Falls of Clyde* and got to feel her strength, her mana, that allowed her to survive almost 147 years.

May she rest in peace forevermore.