



MID-SUSSEX CALEDONIAN SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2017

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Members' Evening

Friday 24th March 2017

7.15 for a 7.30pm start until 10.00 pm

The Old School Hall, Cuckfield

“Reflections of an Obedient Servant”

“Colin Coventry will have something to declare about his main career with HM Customs & Excise, a challenging 8 year diversion into HM Treasury, working behind the scenes at Buckingham Palace and his post-retirement consultancy work including skirmishes with the Russian Underworld.” Sounds intriguing!

The cost of the evening is **£5.00 per person PLUS a plate of savoury or sweet finger food to share.** Tea, coffee etc provided.

Please pay at the door.

Please note: the car park at the Old School Hall is small and the narrow access road leading to it is difficult to navigate due to residents' cars, so we advise you to park in the public car park in the centre of the village. Coming from the north (B2036), turn left at the mini roundabout in the centre of the village at the foot of the High Street, SP Haywards Heath. The car park is immediately on the right behind a wall. Coming from the south, Ansty (B2036),

after the sharp bends at the beginning of the village, turn right at the same mini roundabout as above and follow directions. From Haywards Heath, follow signs to the centre of the village and the entrance to the car park is on the left hand side before the mini roundabout. Leave the car park on foot, turn left and follow the pavement round to the footpath leading to the Church. The Old School Hall is next to the Church.

Bluebell Stroll

Sunday 7th May 2017, 3.00 pm

A slightly different format for our Spring Walk and Scottish Tea. Kim and Ben Bayne are kindly inviting us to take a short stroll to enjoy their pretty bluebell wood. Bring a pic-nic! Full details in the next newsletter.

Annual Meeting

Friday 9th June 2017, 7.30 pm

Haywards Heath Town Hall, Boltro Road

Golf Day and Barbecue

Date and venue tba

Summer Garden Party

We are looking at the possibility of holding a summer garden party, probably in August. We will let you know....

RECENT EVENTS

Burns' Night Dinner Dance

Saturday 21st January 2017

Cottesmore Hotel, Golf and Country Club.



This year 50 members and guests met at the Cottesmore Hotel for our annual Burns' Night Dinner Dance. The dining room was decorated with flags and tartan banners and Marian Imrie provided the attractive floral decorations for the tables. The haggis was piped in by Bruce Urquhart and addressed by Jeff Robertson. Grace was said by Roy Horn.



After an enjoyable meal Frank Kay, one of our newest members, gave a very interesting and well researched speech to The Immortal Memory. Bob Imrie then delivered a humorous Toast to the Lassies and Karen Beadle, another new member, graciously thanked him on behalf of said lassies.

Lee and Chris Pratt and Carol and Julian Blake kindly acted as our Dance Masters with a programme of dances which catered both for beginners and more experienced dancers. We all appreciated the impromptu but nevertheless beautifully executed demonstration dance performed by six of our experienced dancers.

Our sincere thanks go to Bob Imrie, ably supported by Marian, for all the hard work he put into organising this most enjoyable evening.

The collection plate for the evening generated £125 for the benefit of our designated charity Kangaroos.



Five Presidents and Two Dance Masters

90 YEARS OF THE MID-SUSSEX CALEDONIAN SOCIETY

To celebrate our 90th anniversary last year, one of our long-standing members, David Anderson, wrote a history of the Mid Sussex Caledonian Society, based on his study of the archives and minutes of the Society, going back to its creation in 1926 and we thought that members would be interested to read it.

“This year, 2016, the Mid-Sussex Caledonian Society is celebrating its 90th Anniversary by holding a Summer Garden Party in August.

When the committee of the Caledonian Social and Dance Society resolved to propose the creation of a Mid-Sussex Caledonian Society at their 8th January 1926 Social, little did they think that the Society would still be in existence 90 years later.

From 1926 to 1939, the Society was run by “County” Ladies and Gentlemen and the main function was an annual Social and Dance, held in the first quarter of the year. These were grand affairs, held in the Queens Hall, Cuckfield and involving up to 200 participants. They started at 7:30pm and continued until 2:00am the following morning. The entertainments included pipers (who also played for the Scottish Dancing), singers, demonstration dancers and comedians (Jock Walker, who had deputised for Sir Harry Lauder), together with an Orchestra to accompany the non-Scottish dances. From a committee meeting in May 1926, the minutes record that ‘it was resolved to recommend at a Future meeting when conditions were again normal after the “STRIKE” that a half-day’s outing by charabanc for a circular tour, visiting a seaside resort, be arranged’

It is believed that the society was in abeyance during the war years and was resurrected in the late 40’s. At this time, money was scarce and a different society emerged. Functions were held in local scout and legion huts and village halls and the events included Dances, Ceilidhs, Whist Drives, Halloween Parties and Burn’s Suppers. A St Andrews Dinner Dance was introduced in the 1960s. When the Dolphin Fair was resurrected in 1957, the Society took a Food Stall to generate funds for the society and continued this for many years. The Society also participated in 4 Dolphin Processions in the early 1960s. A significant change at the end of this period was the introduction of associate membership. During this period, one of the major achievements of the society was to undertake the organisation and running of the County Ball, held in Lewes Town Hall on March 6th, 1965. The society managed to arrange some sponsorship from Baxters of Fochabers who, in addition to providing a generous hamper for the raffle, also provided soup for all the guests at the end of the

evening – this was particularly welcome, as snow had been falling since the early morning on the day of the Ball.

During the period 1966 – 1986, the Society’s activities reflected the membership – lots of families with young children. In addition to the formal events such as St Andrews and Burns, many other activities were introduced to cater for the youngsters. At Halloween Parties, children (and some ‘older’ children!) dressed up, ‘dooked’ for apples and tried to eat treacle scones dangling from a piece of string. At Ceilidhs, the Society was blessed with a wide range of talent from within the membership, both adult and children - musical instruments were played, sketches were performed, recitations were given, songs were sung, dances were performed and a great time was had by all. We also enjoyed family walks, games evenings and talks. During the late 70’s, the Mid Sussex Pipe Band was formed, comprising many members of the society. Although independent, it was closely aligned with the society.

During the next 20 years, the membership has gradually tended towards the ‘empty nesters’. Children have grown up and moved far and wide. It has been difficult to attract and retain younger families, possibly because many mums now have to work, so time is precious and there are a huge range of other attractions for the youngsters of today. Accordingly, while the formal events of St Andrews and Burns remained popular, other events have changed. Walks with Scottish Tea are still popular, although the children attending are more likely to be grandchildren! Golf days and Barbecues have been introduced and trips have been organised (e.g. visits to the Houses of Parliament and a sail on the Waverley Paddle Steamer). Theatre visits with meals before or after the performance have become very popular.

During the first eighty years of its existence, while Scottish Dancing remained a common link, the Society has adapted to meet the demands of the times and the latest social trends.”

David B Anderson

