

# The Top Half Times

**Sub. Editor:** Someone who filters the garbage out of this newspaper to maintain the readership.  
**Editor:** Someone who puts the garbage straight back in again to maintain the readership.  
**Published:** In the hope that there actually is a readership.

Vol. Ochd No. Coig

An Dubhlachd 2012



CELEBRATING FOLK MUSIC IN THE CENTRE



## EVATORIAL

**Ceud Mile Fáilte**

**100 Thousand Welcomes!**

Here we are again, another Top Half Times Issue, just for Andy's birthday. It seems like only 12 months ago that we published the last one! Time flies when you are a shy and retiring person. A good contingent of Alice Folkies made it up to Mary River for The Top Half back in June, and as always it was a great weekend with some fantastic music in a beautiful setting with time to meet up with old friends and to make new ones. Congratulations to The Top End Folk Club for another ripper festival. This year has also seen the launch of the Alice Springs Folk Club's very own website. It has been a bit of a challenge for those of us still using carrier pigeons to get the folk news out there, however we are up and running and you can find us at:-

[www.alicespringsfolkclub.com](http://www.alicespringsfolkclub.com)

The other great thing that has happened this year is of course the advent of The Courtyard Sessions held each month at The Desert Park. These have been hugely successful and long may they continue. Jeanette Wormold is the lass responsible for getting these up and running and she deserves all our thanks.



When you next see her, give her a big hug and a kiss, and say thanks.

**Happy St. Andrew's Day** to all our readers, and especially to our local Scottish folk who together with their rich culture brighten our lives on a daily basis, and who provide prestigious publications such as ours with so much to write about.

[The McTruth is out there!](#)

[The Practical Scot](#)

It has been rightly said that there are as many sides to the Scottish character as there are checks in a plaid (a tartan kilt). History, climate, and physical features have combined to produce the proverbially undemonstrative and thrifty Scot with their strongly developed sense of independence. But there are other equally prominent features in their make-up; and all the reliable estimates of the character of the Scot portray them also as a severely practical person, hard-working, competent, educated and hard-headed.

In moving about their world, they are concerned primarily with the practical use of things. When a Scot was shown St. Paul's for the first time the only comment was, "Man, it would hold a terrible, lot of hay." And when the mayor of a major Scottish city was asked to express an opinion about the Pyramids his summing up was simply, "What a lot of masonry work and no rent coming in."

[The Thrifty Scot](#)

It has been said that Poverty is the first fact in the history of Scotland. It follows that the Scot, coming from a long line of forebears blessed with but little material wealth, has never been able to tolerate waste in any form. Show them the majesty of the Eiffel Tower, and they ask "What fool built that thing?" Put them down on the banks of Niagara and their main concern is for the "perfect waste of water." "In a country in which it had been historically difficult to acquire a surfeit of "stuff" they have had to make the most of hard circumstances and if they were to survive to remember always to ask their wallet what they could buy. A Scot never pays cash without reflection. In a word, thrift is in their blood. As the cynic has it "A Mactavish is never lavish."

Two musicians are walking down the street, and one says to the other, "Who was that piccolo I saw you with last night?" The other replies, "That was no piccolo, that was my fife."



## Scottish Independence

For years and years now there have been rumblings north of the border between England and Scotland about The Scots wishing to become an independent country. The current First Minister of Scotland Mr. Alex Salmond has long been a vocal supporter of this move and has pushed for a referendum on the subject. Mr. Salmond pictured below ( are we sure about this...Ed)



might need to have a re-think. The latest polls show that only 30% of the Scots are in favour of such a move, with 58% against. Interestingly, a poll taken in England showed that the majority of the English were in favour of the Scots leaving. It has yet to be decided whether ex-pat Scots would have a vote in any such referendum however, The Top Half Times has been able to procure a copy of the voting papers which will be used, and our local Scottish folk might like to keep a copy in case they need it later.



Referendum on Scottish Independence

Place a cross in the box to indicate your preference

Y'up firrit?	
Aye	
Naw	
Mibbe's aye, mibbe's naw	
Who's askin'?	

Further research has revealed that the deputy 1st Minister of Scotland is Nicola Sturgeon. (You may think this all sounds a bit fishy but you can McGoogle it if you don't believe us.)

## Rumour No. 1

Well known editor of a much loved newspaper wanted to increase the security on his computer and when prompted for a password eight characters long he picked Snow White and the seven dwarves!

## Billy Connolly Quote

“ I've always wanted to go to Switzerland to see what the army does with all those wee red knives.”

## Tossing The Caber

There are several versions concerning the origins of caber tossing. This is just one of them.

Tossing the caber is easily the most recognisable trademark of Scottish Highland games and is one of the most spectacular of the heavy events.

The origins of caber tossing are unknown although it has been suggested that it was developed by foresters for throwing tree trunks into the river. It would be difficult to devise a more physically demanding method of moving felled timber and the more likely explanation is that it was a sport amongst foresters that became part of the traditional Highland Gathering events.

The dimensions of a caber-or cabar in Gaelic-can vary enormously but the norm weighs about 150lbs (68 kgs), is 18 feet (5.5m) long and about 9 inches (23cms) thick at one end, tapering to about 5 inches (13cms) at the other.

The caber used at some Highland games weighs over 150lbs (70kgs) and is 17ft 4ins (5.3m) long. The Braemar caber is only 132lbs (59.9kgs) in weight but is 19ft 9ins (6m) in length.

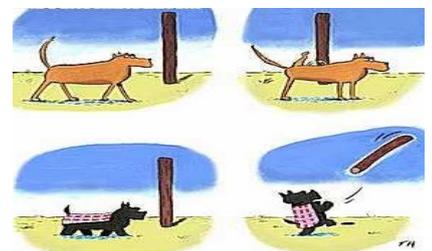
The largest caber recorded in the Guinness Book of records is 25ft (7.62m) and 280lbs(127kgs)

Games organizers strive for consistency in the weight of their caber and because timber dries out and becomes lighter, they will often soak the caber in a convenient loch for some days before their annual games or, bore holes in it and fill them with molten lead!

Contrary to popular belief, the caber is not thrown for distance but for style. The games officials will set the caber on its end with the thickest portion in the air. The athlete rests the caber against his shoulder and, claspng his arms around it, performs the difficult task of lifting it up off the ground whilst keeping it perfectly balanced. When he's achieved that, he will give it a quick flick up and move his hands under the narrow end. He's now ready to throw it.

The competition is judged with the aid of an imaginary clock-face on the ground spread out flat in front of the thrower with him facing the 12 o'clock position. That invisible clock-face keeps pace with him as he runs and when he has reached the desired speed he will stop abruptly at what becomes the 6 o' clock position and heave the caber up so that its heavy end lands in the middle of the clock and the whole caber turns right over, ending up with the narrow end pointing exactly towards the 12 o'clock position.

Quite frequently none of the competitors will achieve the exact 12 o'clock position and the prizes will be given for the throw that is nearest to the ideal. In some games, if the caber was not thrown, an old-fashioned two-handed, crosscut saw would be brought on and the heavies would saw an inch off the caber until one of them threw it.



## Policy Meltdown

Moving from the private sector to the public sector for work is not as easy as it sounds says newly appointed School “Jolley Janitor” Alex Sherrin. Mr. Sherrin ( pictured below at his first school assembly) was shocked when told that his dress did not meet govt. policy regulations. It was a health and safety matter and something to do with climbing ladders on windy days!!



## Greyfriars Bobby



For more than a century, he has been seen as the epitome of man’s best friend, known for loyally refusing to leave his master’s graveside for 14 years. Now, however, it appears the heartwarming tale of Greyfriars Bobby the Skye terrier was a Victorian hoax cooked up by money-grabbing businessmen, an academic has revealed. Dr Jan Bondeson has uncovered evidence that there were in fact two Bobbies from 1858 to 1872 – and that neither of them belonged to the man buried in Greyfriars cemetery, Edinburgh, whose grave they sat by. Dr Bondeson, who has published his findings in

a book, said: ‘I knew the famous story of Greyfriars Bobby but the more I researched it the more I smelt a rat.’ His research shows the first dog was in fact a stray which wandered into the nearby Heriot’s hospital and was then taken to the graveyard. James Brown, the curator of the cemetery, treated him so well that he stayed, and locals assumed he was mourning his dead master. As the story spread, visitors to the churchyard increased 100-fold, with many donating money to Mr Brown and using a local restaurant owned by John Traill, according to accounts found by Dr. Bondeson. He says his research shows the first dog died in 1867 and was replaced with another by Mr Brown and Mr Traill in an effort to keep visitors flocking to the grave. He said: ‘In my opinion, all the theories about the dog’s life are about as full of holes as a piece of Swiss cheese. After five years of research, I believe he was an unwitting impostor who made use of the sentimental notions of how a dog should behave to get a good life for himself.’

Greyfriars Bobby has been immortalised in a number of books and films, including the 1961 Disney hit of the same name.

The man who blows his own trumpet is usually a soloist.

## Scottish Dialect

The Scottish dialect can prove a problem for most people from countries other than Scotland. We hope that some of the examples given below help you next time you have a conversation with a Scot. ( Mind you if it’s Iain Campbell all we can say is “good luck”...Ed)

Galoot (gah-loot) bumbling fool; slow-witted person (as in “Och that’s no’ a tour guide it’s a naked rambler, ya daft galoot!”)

Sassenach (sass-y-nak)

1. An Englishman
2. used by Highlanders to describe non-gaelic-speaking Lowlanders
3. Someone who actually understands the rules of cricket and mentions the 1966 World Cup Soccer Final every bloody chance they get.

Glaikit (glai-kit)

Dialect, chiefly Scot, meaning stupid, senseless, silly. (as in “ he stood there wi’ a glaikit look on his fizzog”)

Eejit (ee-jit)

Dialect, chiefly Scot. Idiot, simpleton, one not possessed of all their mental faculties. (as in. “Yer aff yer heid, ya eejit. That’s no’ a real dug”)

Fitba’ (fit-baw) Dialect, chiefly Scot 1. the beautiful game. 2. stupid game involving grown men kicking a lump of leather around a field, often sparking irrational behavior, bad language and blind devotion much to the detriment of normal marital relations.

Crabbit

(cra-bit) Dialect, chiefly Scot. ~adj. 1. ill-tempered, grumpy, curt, disagreeable; in a bad mood [esp. in the morning]. ( often used in ” ken this, yer a crabbit get, so you are”) ~n. by their nature or temperament conveys an aura of irritability.

Numpty

(num-p-tee) Dialect, chiefly Scot ~n. 1. a bumbling fool; one who is intellectually challenged (“no’ the fu’shillin”) 2. Widely known in Scotland as an MSP (Member of Scottish Parliament) [as in “These numpties couldnae organise a piss up in a brewery.”]

Steamin

(stee-min) Slang, chiefly Scot. ~adj. drunk, inebriated, the state of having consumed too much bevy. ( see also “guttered, fu’,

pissed, gassed, bloated, stoned, miraculous, legless, smashed, minced, wrecked, mingin', welly'd, mortal, arsed, blitzed, blazin', hingin', buckled)

**Wabbit**

(wah-bit) Dialect, chiefly Scot. ~adj. 1. exhausted, out of breath; unable to function due to extreme tiredness (as in "Playin' wi' thae weans has gote me wabbit") [similar to puggled]

Complaints received by this publication about snobbery being prevalent over on the East side of town may well be justified. This sign was spotted recently outside local Laird Scot Balfour's residence.



Which reminds us:-  
When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

**Rumour No. 2**

Mary Evans' daughter Kirsty asked her for a pet spider for her birthday, so Mary went to the local pet shop and they were \$70!!! Blow this, she thought, I can get one cheaper off the web.

**Windows Recall**

It has come to our attention that a few copies of the Scottish version of Windows 8 may have accidentally been shipped outside Scotland. If you have one of the Scottish editions you may need some help understanding the commands. The Scottish edition may be recognized by looking at the opening screen. It reads WIN-DAES 8, Ye Ken, with a back-

ground picture of William Wallace superimposed on a St. Andrews Cross. It is shipped with a Mel Gibson screen saver.

Also note the Recycle Bin is called 'The Bucket.' My Computer is called 'Yon Computer Thingie.' Dialup Networking is called 'Phone the Bhoys.' Control Panel is known as 'the Dashboard.' Hard Drive is referred to as 'the tractor.'

**Other features:**

- Instead of an error message you get a windae covered with a picture of a neep.

OK = 'ats fine'

Cancel = na na ma loon

Reset = Och ye'd be as weel startin again

Yes = Och aye

No = nae chunce mon

Find = if ye'd bothered to pit it in a safe place, ye widnae need to look for it noo

Go to = go'n ower 'ere

Back = back the wye

Help = geese a haun'

Stop = pack it in

Start = com on 'en

Settings = sittins

Programs = stuff whit daes stuff

Documents = stuff I hived done afore

Also note that Windaes 8 does not recognise capital letters or punctuation marks.

Some programs that are exclusive to Windaes 8:

Pincil an paper.....A word processor

Colourin book.....A graphics program

Addin machine.....Calculator

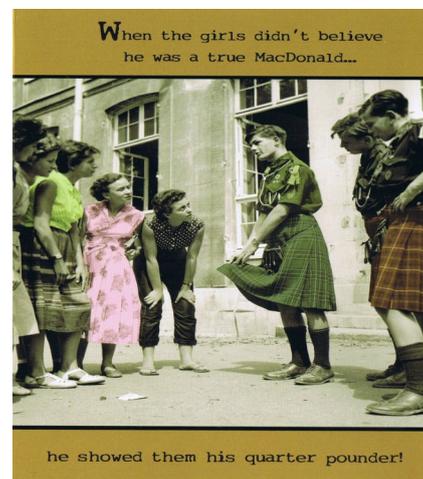
Jukebox.....CD player

Photies.....A graphics viewer

Tax records.....Usually an empty file

"Never trust a man, who when left alone with a tea cosey... Doesn't try it on."

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak



**Scottish Proverbs**

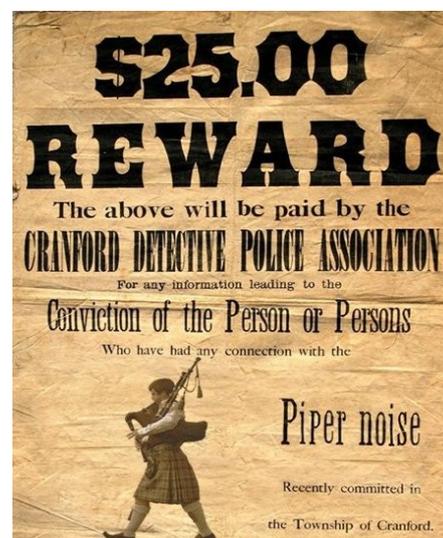
1. Twelve highlanders and a bagpipe make a rebellion.
2. Never marry for money, ye'll borrow it cheaper.
3. Get what you can and keep what you have; that's the way to get rich.
4. One whisky is all right; two is too much; three is too few.

**Word Of The Day**

Exhaustipated:-  
Just too tired to give a shit.

**Breaking News**

The birthplace of local Piper Neil Ross has for many years been disputed by other members of Clan Ross. At long last the appearance of an authentic document which was given to the Editors in strictest confidence would seem to settle the issue once and for all. Cranford it is!!



## Haggis Hurling



IL.vv.CCCC

Haggis hurling is a Scottish sport involving the hurling of a haggis as far as possible for distance and accuracy from atop a platform (usually a whisky barrel). The Haggis must be edible after landing.

Although its proponents often claim an ancient origin, haggis hurling is actually a very recent invention. In 2004 Robin Dunseath, publicist for Scottish entrepreneur Tom Farmer and ex-president of the World Haggis Hurling Association, said he invented the sport as a practical joke for the 1977 Gathering of the Clans in Edinburgh, later using it to raise funds for charity at Highland games. Two variations have developed, one enacted at festivals, the other a professional sport.

The present World Record for Haggis Hurling was set at 217 feet by Lorne Coltart at the Milngavie Highland Games on 11 June 2011, beating Allan Pettigrew's 180 feet record which had stood for over twenty years. However, the Australian cricket player Tom Moody was purported to have thrown a haggis in 1989 over 230 feet.

Modern Haggis Hurling is judged on the basis of distance and accuracy of the hurl and a split or burst haggis is immediately disqualified, as the haggis must be fit to eat after landing. The sport requires subtle technique rather than brute force, as the hurl must result in a gentle landing to keep the haggis skin intact. There is a World Haggis Hurling Championship. Plans to use a fake haggis in

a hurling competition at a Highland festival in Melbourne have split the purists from those who are fearful of the mess a high-speed impacting may cause.

### James M Barrie Quote

There are few more impressive sights in the world than a Scotsman on the make.

Tourist: "I'm sorry, waiter, but I only have enough money for the bill. I have nothing left for a tip."

Highland Waiter: "Let me add up that bill again sir."

Of The Day

### Exclusive:

#### Interview with Sally Balfour

All the staff here at the T.H.T. (especially old Skinny Malinky Longlegs..Sub Ed.) have been fans of angel-voiced Alice Springs native Sally Balfour for a long time.



We are very excited that she has started to record her own material. Sally has been performing on stage for some time now, with appearances at the Top Half Festival, Monte's, St. Andrew's nights, and with Warren H. Williams. Her 1<sup>st</sup> song released, is the beautiful self-penned "Through The Night" Check it out on Sally's Facebook page. Sally agreed to share some of her thoughts on Family, Singing, and Life in general with our intrepid Sub Editor.

"I was born in Alice Springs, and went to school here through to year 12. Dad was always a great

help with homework. I once had to find out why the river Clyde ran through the middle of Glasgow. Dad had the answer straight away. If it didn't run through Glasgow it would be mugged. He's so knowledgeable my Dad."

"I can remember been dragged along to folk nights as a youngster, and pretending to enjoy it. Secretly I was listening to the likes of Tiny Tim, Sheb Wooley, and Chad Morgan. Listen to Chad's *The Shotgun Wedding*, such beautiful words. I cry every time I hear it. Mind you I cried the 1<sup>st</sup> time I heard Dad sing, but that's another story."

Some of the romantic lyrics in my songs are influenced by Dad. He's very romantic. He and Mum, before they were married were out on his motor bike, and they passed a bbq. Mum yelled out that she loved the smell of bacon and eggs, so Dad turned around and rode closer just so she could smell them better. Family life is important to me, I'm still living in the granny flat at home, and my generous Dad has said I needn't pay rent until I have saved enough money to leave. I have had some interesting job offers over the years. I answered an Ad. for someone to retail imported parrots. When I asked the owner how they lost their tails, he became quite rude and I didn't get the job."

"I get the inspiration for my songs from observing life. My early ones were really only ditties but I feel I have progressed. I wrote my 1<sup>st</sup> song in the back seat of our car on a road trip to Adelaide. It was called "Are we there yet?" and the chorus was the title sung ten times. I never got to finish it as Dad ran the car off the road!"

"I always get a buzz when I'm performing live. (I suggest you get the dodgy lead fixed..Ed.) I also get nervous playing the harmonica so I usually play the guitar. My moral father Dave Evans lent me his 3 chords, (Is that why he doesn't play anymore?..Sub Ed.)

and I'm hoping to pinch some more off Dad when he's out."  
 "I'll close with some of my favourite inspirational sayings, and thanks for talking at me."

"A day without sunshine is like, well, night!"  
 "I feel like I'm diagonally parked in a parallel universe"  
 "On the other hand, like, you have different fingers"  
 "Like, Money a Mickle Maks a Muckle"  
 "Like"

We here at the T.H.T. wish Sally all the best with her singing career and if she ever needs a reference, we'd be only too happy to write one.

Members of the Scottish Parliament have just returned home from a trip to an orphanage in Zimbabwe. "It was a great chance to see such underprivileged people with very little hope in life" said Alfred Mgombo, aged six.

Looking for that ideal Xmas gift?



One day a Scotsman goes into a pharmacy shop, reaches into his pocket and takes out a small bottle and a teaspoon. He pours some liquid onto the teaspoon and offers it to the chemist. "Could you taste this for me, please?" The chemist takes the teaspoon, puts it in his mouth, swills the liquid around and swal-

lows it."Does that taste sweet to you?" says Hamish. "No, not at all," says the chemist. "Oh that's a relief," says Hamish. "The doctor told me to come here and get my urine tested for sugar."

**The secret of enjoying a good wine:**

1. Open the bottle to allow it to breathe.



2. If it does not look like it's breathing, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY give it mouth-to-mouth.

Morgan Flint Quote

"A well balanced life is a glass in each hand".

Neil Ross Quote

My neighbour knocked on my door at 2:30am this morning, can you believe that, 2:30am?! Luckily for him I was still up playing my Bagpipes.

Young Miles Balfour pictured below at last year's St. Andrews, about to tell his Grandad that he's finished the bottle of single malt and would like a wee!



Final Word

As always, the success of each St. Andrews Night depends on a number of people who band together to provide music, entertainment, sound gear and donation of prizes, etc. In no particular order, the organisers would like to thank:

- Scott & Sally Balfour
- Liese Gordon and her wonderful choir.
- Lady Mary
- Neil Ross
- Mel & Neil Phillips
- Jenny Pender
- Ted & Nerys
- Shorty's Meats
- Dougal McConnell & The Staff of The All Seasons Oasis

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY

**All of YOU**, who have supported the night. All money raised will go towards funding the next Top Half Folk Festival held at Glen Helen, Alice Springs in 2013.

If you want to drop us a line at any time, we can be contacted on: [tophalffolkfest@gmail.com](mailto:tophalffolkfest@gmail.com) and don't forget to check out the new website. In the meantime if you have any complaints about tonight blame him or her.



Slàinte mhor a h-uile là a chi 's nach fhaic

Great health to you every day that we see you and every day that we don't.