

THE ATHELSTANEFORD SALTIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH FLAG TRUST

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Provost Sheena Richardson and depute provost Roger Knox, on behalf of the Council, present a Saltire to the Trustees to mark the occasion.

Tartan day

At the start of April 2008, East Lothian Council organised the county's first ever Tartan Day celebrations in honour of the 1320 Declaration of Arbroath. This culminated on Sunday 6 April with a series of countryside walks, each of which ended at Athelstaneford. Conditions were dreich, but more than 30 hardy souls participated and in front of the Church heard depute provost, Roger Knox, read out an abridged version of the Declaration.

Next year, to mark the 250th anniversary of Robert Burns' death, the Scottish Government is launching 'Homecoming Scotland' – an initiative aimed at attracting ex-pats home. It is hoped that this will give East Lothian Council's 2009 Tartan Day celebrations a boost, and that Athelstaneford will feature again in the programme of events. ❖



Ministerial Visit

There are a great number of Scottish On St Andrew's Day, 30 November 2007, the Trustees were delighted to welcome to Athelstaneford the Scottish Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture, Linda Fabiani MSP. This is only the second visit by a Minister to the site, the first having been in 1998 by the then Secretary of State, Donald Dewar MP.

Linda Fabiani was thrilled to be met in the village Churchyard by a large contingent of flag-waving children from the village Primary School. The invitation to the Minister had been made to mark East Lothian Council's decision to fly the St Andrew's Flag permanently from all of the main Council buildings, in acknowledgement of the county's special status as the birthplace of Scotland's flag.

Linda Fabiani spoke with the children and other guests in the Church, and thanked everyone for attending, saying that she very much welcomed the Council's initiative "*The historical ties between the Saltire and East Lothian are important, and the continuous flying of the flag is a fitting recognition*". ❖

CONTACT DETAILS

The Scottish Flag Trust, which is a registered charity (No: SC002778), was established in 1984. Its objectives are:-

- to maintain and upgrade the Athelstaneford Heritage Centre and Saltire Memorial
- to raise public awareness about the origins of Scotland's national flag.

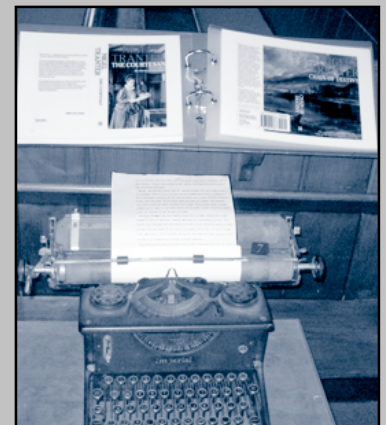
For information, or to order a school information pack, mouse mat or T-shirt, write to the Scottish Flag Trust at PO Box 84, Edinburgh EH3 8LG.

Key contacts are:-

David Williamson, Chairman (Tel:01368.863.239)
Charlie Blair, Custodian (Tel:01620.880.297)
Malcolm Duncan, Treasurer (Tel:01620.880.306)

Tranter Exhibition

The Trustees are delighted that an exhibition about the life and work of Scottish historian and author Nigel Tranter has come to Athelstaneford. The exhibition, which was originally housed in Lennoxlove House, Haddington, has now found a permanent home in the north transept of the 18th century Athelstaneford Church. It is particularly apt, as Nigel was married in the church in 1933, and he had a deep affection for the village. He was a Trustee of the Flag Trust for many years, and closely involved in the conversion of the doocot into the Heritage Centre. The narrative used in the audio-visual dramatisation of the Saltire appearing above the 9th century battle draws heavily from Nigel's book "Kenneth". ❖



VISIT THE WEBSITE

Information about Athelstaneford can be found via the St Andrew Society Website at

www.st-andrew.org.uk