



# SALTIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH FLAG TRUST

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## Visit of Commonwealth Games Athletes

Last September, Athelstaneford played host to a team of athletes representing Saint Kitts and Nevis in the Glasgow Games. Formerly known as the British Leeward Islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis became independent in 1983. The team colours are based on their national flag, with green representing fertility, yellow for sunshine, red for the struggle for independence, black for the African heritage, and two stars standing for hope and freedom.

The Saint Kitts and Nevis team visited Athelstaneford Primary where they enjoyed a "race" against the children in the playground – no small challenge given that star athlete Antoine Adams came 4<sup>th</sup> in the 100 metres final in 10.16 seconds – before



Athletes by the Heritage Centre.

being given a tour of the Flag Heritage Centre. Note the supplies of Irn Bru next to the athletes at the viewpoint – clearly a contributor to the team's sprinting prowess!

## The Cross in the Sky

What happened at Athelstaneford in the ninth century comes to us from manuscripts written 300 years later that preserve the oral and written memory of an event when the Cross appeared before a battle near Athelstaneford that inspired the Scots and Picts to victory, a vision handed down by many of Scotland's later historians.

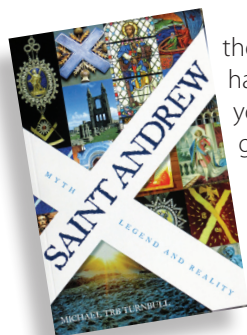
In his *Scotichronicon* Haddington-born **Walter Bower** (1385-1449) writes that the saint appeared to the king in a dream the night before the battle, saying 'God ... has hearkened to your prayer and tomorrow he will give you a joyful victory and lay your enemies low ... because an angel bearing the standard of our Lord's Cross will go in front of you'.

A daytime vision of the Cross in the sky is also preserved by **John Leslie** (1526-96) in his *Historie of Scotland*: 'ffor the Croce quhairvpon S. Andro deit ... suddanlie apperit, in vuie [realistic] and bricht colouris, in a manner, sett in the Aire ... and the Saxounis war sa slane doun'.

In the *History of the Church and State of Scotland* Book 1, **John Spottiswoode** (1565-1639) explains that 'Hungus betook himself to prayer. A little before day, falling into a slumber, it appeared to him that the Apostle of St Andrew stood by him and assured him of victory'. Spottiswoode continues 'that in the joining of battle there appeared in the air a cross in the form of the letter X ... this so terrified the enemies that they gave back'.

The late **Nigel Tranter**, a historian and Trustee at Athelstaneford, gave these early accounts a vivid contemporary twist In the novel *Kenneth* (1990), emphasising the striking deep blue of the sky and the pure white of the Cross which make up the Scottish Saltire.

One of the current Trustees, historian **Michael T R B Turnbull**, suggests in his book *Saint Andrew: Myth, Legend and Reality* (2014) that as the sun rose at dawn, King Angus and his men were inspired by a dramatic vision of the Cross clearly visible in the sun's refracted light.



## Annual Saltire Presentation

The youngest and the oldest pupils at Athelstaneford Primary prepare to hoist the school's new flag, presented for St Andrew's Day by the Trust.





## STV Cameras in Athelstaneford

Everyone will remember the iconic 1970/80s STV series **Weir's Way** in which author and broadcaster Tom Weir journeyed through some of the most stunning parts of Scotland. The series was so popular that when repeated in the 2000s, it captured 30% of audience figures!

A year ago, STV brought out a series of 8 programmes entitled **On Weir's Way with David Hayman**, in which the film, TV and stage actor and director David Hayman followed in the footsteps of the great man.

Now, STV is about to bring out a further series entitled **Hayman's Way** which will involve David Hayman visiting parts of the country not previously covered. The new series will include a programme focusing on East Lothian, and the Trustees were thrilled that the producers decided to incorporate the birthplace of the Saltire. Filming on site took place in March, with the series scheduled to be broadcast in the autumn. So keep your eyes peeled!



### Launch of New Leaflet

The Flag Trust has joined forces with the newly formed East Lothian Community Rail Partnership (ELCRP) and East Lothian Council in seeking to promote the county by encouraging more rail travellers to visit. A leaflet targeted at walkers and cyclists has been produced which will highlight the extensive network of quiet country pathways, through stunning countryside, linking Drem Station to Athelstaneford. The intention is to display the leaflets at Waverley and at North Berwick.



## Contact Details

The Scottish Flag Trust was established in 1984 to maintain the historic Athelstaneford site and to raise awareness of the origins of Scotland's flag. It is a registered charity (No SC0027778). Visit the website [www.scottishflagtrust.com](http://www.scottishflagtrust.com) for information about the Scottish Flag Trust. Any queries should be forwarded to [info@scottishflagtrust.com](mailto:info@scottishflagtrust.com)