Newsletter - Winter 2025

From the President - Frank Paterson…

The older I get, the faster time passes!!
To me it just seems like yesterday, since Welcome 25 was launched at Poppleton on the 1st of January.
Since then we've shared many pleasurable hours together, invariably finishing up singing Auld Lang Syne.
The sentiments of that wonderful Burns song are all about cherishing old friendships and shared memories.
My fervent wish is we keep that in mind and continue to find ways to enjoy one another's company.
I hope the new year will be kind to you and yours.
A very Happy Christmas and a healthy, fulfilling, contented 2026.

Yours aye,
Frank

Membership Update

In this newsletter, we welcome 2 new members - Susan Widdowson & Hazel Hague.

The society now has 96 members which is the largest membership we've had over the last few years. That said, the Council remains keen to continue to attract new members to the society. You may have attended events at which our society leaflet/ flyer that lists upcoming events for members to pass onto friends, family members and others who may wish to consider joining us.
Please distribute these as you see fit.

Please also encourage anyone with an interest in the society to view the website at yorkscot.org.uk. We try to keep the website up-to-date and to provide as much information as we can on the society. There is a membership application form on the website for anyone who wishes to apply for membership.

St Andrew's Day Lunch

50 members and friends enjoyed a celebratory lunch in honour of Scotland's Patron Saint on Saturday 29th November at the Novotel. The society's collection of past presidents banners were displayed on the walls and the tables were beautifully decorated with a range of tartans.

Hazel Hanson's Grace got us off to a good start:-

We raise a glass and share fine fare
On this auspicious St Andrews Day
We Scots and friends of Scotland here
Our own Saint, St Andrew we cheer
We thank you Lord for this meal together
We thank you for Scotland and purple heather
For Scottish delicacies and Scottish weather
And a dram of whisky to weather that weather!!

A splendid three course well-served meal topped off with coffee and petit fours provided us with the sustenance for the ongoing series of toasts!

The President proposed **The Loyal Toast** and then read out greetings received from kindred St Andrew Societies in Canada and the United States with our responses.

Frank then gave a succinct summary of the historical background before proposing the toast to **St Andrew, Patron Saint of Scotland.**

Our orator Michael Rigg then entertained us with his recollections of his 40 years as a violinist with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and its role as an international ambassador for Scotland. He kept us enthralled with his stories about the range of international concert halls and musical celebrities he had played with. The orchestral piece always used for the orchestras' final, final. final encore was the music for the eightsome reel and Michael had the audience clapping when he finished his performance playing *Kate Dalrymple* on the violin before proposing the **Toast to Scotia.**

Our final toast was to **Absent Friends** with everyone linking hands around the room with Piper Jim Sharpe leading us into Auld Lang Syne.

Tour of the Station Hall at the National Railway Museum

On 27th September, Princess Anne formally opened the refurbished Station Hall to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the National Railway Museum.

On 2nd October, President Frank gave a group of twenty members and friends a 90-minute explanatory tour setting the very wide range of exhibits in context.
He reflected that during his railway career he had actually used many of the now historic items! *(Editor's Note* - Yes he is that old!"

Annual Apple Harvest

Living Potential, based on a working farm on the banks of the river Wharfe near Sicklinghall, Wetherby, is a community interest company, set up to be a non-profit social enterprise.
It is run by a team of staff and volunteers who have many years of experience, teaching and working in a variety of environments and who have seen first-hand the therapeutic effects of nature-based interventions.
In early October, they held an Annual Apple Harvest event and offered the society the opportunity to host an information stand to seek potential new members.
President Frank Paterson and Ladies Circle Chair Helen Porter hosted the stand on behalf of the society. The event attracted hundreds of visitors but sadly no new members for our society so far!
Nevertheless Frank reported - It was a very interesting day and a humbling experience meeting many people who have benefitted from the activities available.

Shown above, Frank Paterson & Helen Porter hosting the society stand.

Left, with the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Cllr Dan Cohen and Tanya, one of the community leaders at Living Potential.

A North East Nicht!

There was nae a spare seat in the hoose as 46 members and friends gathered for our *Bothy Nicht*—a grand evening filled wi' laughter, music, and more Doric than the average loon or quine could handle. Background music from the *Golden Years of Jimmy Shand* set the tone, transporting everyone straight back to a time when accordions ruled the airwaves.
After a warm welcome (and a wee catch-up over a BYO dram or two), the evening kicked off with two fierce competitions: **The Doric Dictionary Challenge**—which proved that it's very easy to be flummoxed by the mither tongue—and **Old Money**, reminding us just how far a ha'penny used to go.
At 7.30, nostalgia took centre stage with *Films of Auld Aberdeen*, *Scotland the What* and the inimitable S*tanley Baxter* starting his/her day with some enthusiastic attempts at *Scottish Country Dancing.*
Our charming hostesses then served a hearty supper:

🥣 **Cullen Skink & Oatcakes**, followed by 🥧 **Scotch Pies, Beans, & Onion Gravy**, rounded off with 🍫**Tunnock's Tea Cakes** & a comforting cup of tea or coffee.
Once fortified, the **President** announced the challenge results before we were treated to some samples of the *Bothy Culture* of yesteryear delivered by our own members

🎵 **Bothy Ballads** by Frank Paterson and David Waterton-Anderson.

😂 **Shaggy Dog Stories** from Jim Sharpe, Aileen Minns, Jim Robertson, May Townsend, Murray Halliday, Gregor Grant, Moira Deuchars, Ian Tarbet, Alan Kinnaird, Jim Murison and a fine helping of **Harry Lauder classics** courtesy of David and Murray.
The grand finale was a rousing **Singalong Scottish Medley**, with voices (mostly) in tune. The evening closed in traditional style with *Auld Lang Syne* and we all left smiling!!
Our thanks to everyone who helped make the night such a success.

Pictures from the North East Nicht

Ladies Circle

Hello Ladies,

After two successful and happy lunches in October and November, we have now had our Christmas Lunch Party which everyone enjoyed with our Secret Santa and games.
Now we look forward to our theatre outing before Christmas.

I would like to thank our secretary Moira for dealing with the hotel and organising our Ladies Circle members - coming to the lunches every month which can often take up a lot of time. Thanks also to our committee who offer help and support and are always willing to do when asked whatever is needed.

My best wishes go to you all for a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Healthy New Year.

Best wishes.

Helen.

2025/26 Programme

2026

8th January - Lisa Green, Door 84

12th February - Ellie Florentine, Life on Air

12th March - John Lacy, The Lighter Side of Policing

9th April - Stuart Priest, Circus Skills

14th May - AGM

U is for Unicorn

In this newsletter, we are exploring Scotland's connection with the mythical, horned horse, the unicorn! Way back in the fifteenth century, when James I (not to be confused with James VI who was known as James I in England!) was ruling Scotland, the unicorn was chosen as the animal to represent the Scots. Why choose an animal that doesn't actually exist, I hear you ask! Well, no one really knows why!

It is largely believed that the unicorn was chosen as it is the natural enemy of the lion, England's national animal, however, this has since been debunked, as the idea of the two animals being enemies only really developed after the joining of the crowns in 1603.

Belief in this enigmatic creature dates all the way back to the Ancient Greeks when classical historian Ctesias mentioned the horse-like quadrupeds in his book about India, Indica, where he described an unusual animal, like a 'wild ass', with a horn sprouting from its temple. The unicorn then pops up in the Old Testament and the Quran.

The unicorn appeared first in Scotland way back in the 12th century, on the royal coat of arms of William I, aka William the Lion. Legend claimed that only a king could hold a unicorn captive due to the animal's strength and the danger it posed. Now, it makes sense that this legend attracted the attention of James I, who spent eighteen years of his adolescent life held hostage by King Henry IV of England in Windsor Castle. The unicorn soon became a symbol of purity and strength and was adopted by James I and the monarchs who followed him as a representation of their rule. James III emblazoned gold coins with the image of the unicorn, with his son, James IV, and grandson, James V, following suit. It wasn't long until the unicorn was adopted as Scotland's national animal.

Recreation of the Unicorn Tapestries at Stirling Castle

U is for Unicorn

Similar to the thistle, you can see reminders of the importance of the unicorn to the Scot's in our heraldic crests, engravings, gold coins, royal seals, wall panels, coats of arms, tombs and tapestries. Speaking of tapestries, Stirling Castle has an impressive set of seven hand-woven tapestries decorating the walls of the Queen's personal chambers, in the royal palace. Inspired by the famous *Hunt of the Unicorn* series which was created in the 1500s in the low countries (known today as the Netherlands), and are now displayed in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. James V had a set of similar tapestries known as the *History of the Life of the Unicorn* which were believed to have been created between 1495 and 1505. The project took 13 years to complete due to the mediaeval methods that were employed to create them.

In Scotland, we are known for our love of mythical creatures, from giant loch monsters to fairies and kelpies, but none capture our imagination quite like the unicorn. Celebrated on Scottish monuments, castles, palaces, churches, towers and city walls, it is hard to wander through Scotland's ancient streets without being greeted by a regal unicorn, or two.

Scottish unicorn, flag and shield carved at Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh

Forthcoming Events!

We still have a number of exciting events to enjoy throughout the remainder of the 2025/26 membership year - below are the key dates to note:

Thursday 1st January 2026 - Welcome 26
Saturday 24th January 2026 - Burns Supper Celebration
Saturday 14th March - St Patrick's Day Celebration
Saturday 2nd May - RBWF Yorkshire District - Annual Tartan Ball

Further details of each event will be notified nearer the time.

Aberdeen Stories! *(as found on ChatGPT)*

Why do Aberdonians install double-glazing?
To stop their bairns hearing the ice-cream van!

What do you call a tour of Aberdeen on a sunny day?
A once-in-a-lifetime experience!

How many Aberdeen fans does it take to change a light bulb?
Seven: one to change it and six to talk about how good the old one was in 1983!

What do you call an Aberdeen fan with half a brain?
Gifted!

Next Newsletter

Our Spring Newsletter will be published in late March just ahead of Easter.
As with previous years, I will publish a special Burns Night newsletter in February.

In the meantime, I hope you all have a wonderful time over the festive season and don't forget about the Welcome 26 event on New Year's Day.

If you have any articles or information you wish to share with the membership in the next newsletter, please do not hesitate to send this to me at the email address below.
Finally please let me have any feedback you wish to give by emailing me at:
standrewyork@gmail.com
Grant Young - Secretary