



# SALTIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH FLAG TRUST

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## GOT A CAMERA?

Photograph a Saltire in the Sky and win a top prize!



## Saltire in the Sky Photographic Competition Launched

Tradition has it that Scotland's flag – the St Andrew's Cross – was adopted following a 9th century battle near Athelstaneford in which a white cross appeared against the blue of the sky above the fighting, and inspired the Scots to victory.

On Tartan Day, 6 April 2010, the Trust launched a Scotland-wide photographic competition that seeks to put the traditional origins of the flag into a modern context. The challenge for amateur photographers is to try to capture on camera a dramatic image of a Saltire appearing in our skies, whether formed by natural or man-made phenomenon.

For details on how to submit an entry, go to the Trust's website: [www.scottishflagtrust.com](http://www.scottishflagtrust.com). Prize money totalling £500 is on offer, and the closing date is 30 November 2010. The winning entries will be put on public display in East Lothian libraries early in 2011. The Trust would like to record its thanks for the support for the competition of East Lothian Council, the Lottery Awards for All, and the St Andrew Society.



## Language "Hits"

It has always been hard to measure accurately the number of visitors to Athelstaneford. Only a small percentage of people, for example, are known to sign the Heritage Centre visitor book. However, the audio-visual presentation in multi-lingual format now allows the number of "hits" in each language to be recorded. Overall totals for the 2009 season were:- *English* – 960; *Gaelic* – 283; *German* – 52; *French* – 38; *Polish* – 38; *Spanish* – 37; *Italian* – 28. The high Gaelic count is particularly interesting.



## Homecoming Finale 2009

Athelstaneford figured prominently in East Lothian's celebrations to mark the end of Scotland's Year of Homecoming 2009.

Sunday 29 November began with a St Andrew's service in Athelstaneford Parish Church conducted by the new Minister, Rev Joanne Evans-Boiten. The congregation then made its way to the Hepburn Doocot, where a team of Red Lion Parachutists were scheduled to descend from the sky with a giant Saltire. In the event, gale force winds meant the jump had

to be aborted on safety grounds. Undaunted, the Minister delivered a prayer to St Andrew, and, before a large (and shivering!) crowd, presented a special Flag to a group of twenty horsemen/women. The riders then carried the Flag over the Garleton Hills and down into Haddington, where it was taken to St Mary's Church. The evening was marked by a second service, with readings, speeches, and music. The First Minister attended. This was followed by a torch-lit procession to the High Street where the Flag was hoisted, and then an evening of music from Dougie MacLean and Capercaille.



## Memorial Panel Rescued

The Saltire Memorial at Athelstaneford, when erected in 1965, consisted of two copper panels set within a concrete plinth - the main panel depicting the battlescene and the smaller one carrying descriptive text. By 1993, the panels had become badly weathered, and were replaced in granite. The main copper panel was taken to Torness where it was painstakingly restored by apprentices and it is now on display in the Heritage Centre. Early in 2009, the small panel was discovered at the very back of one of the Church cupboards. It is still in its weathered condition, but readable. Given its significance, the Trust has had it framed and it is now forms part of the Nigel Tranter exhibition within the Church.

## New Merchandise

The Trust is delighted to have added **Fridge Magnets** and **Saltire Cards** to its product range.. The Magnets are priced at £1.00, and postage is free for orders of three or more, while the Cards are £2.00. Note that Mouse Mats are now on offer at the reduced price of £1.50. These inexpensive items are ideal gifts, and a great way of promoting Athelstaneford. Orders can be placed by post or via the Trust's website.



The faulty joint!

## Emergency Electrical Works

During March 2010, the Trust was faced by unavoidable works with major financial consequences. In order to secure insurance cover for the Heritage Centre, the Trust had been required to have a Periodic Inspection Report (PIR) carried out. This was expected to be routine, but the PIR failed because readings identified a problem with the earth to the power supply (installed in 1996). Investigations found that the cabling leaving the Church was 3-core, while the cabling entering the Doocot was only 2-core – with the problem therefore suspected to be at the point where the cables joined.

Decisions had to be taken quickly, given the Centre was opening for the season on 1 April. The options were to either replace the entire cabling between the Church and the Doocot, or to find and repair the faulty electrical joint. Neither was easy, given the other pipework (drains, water etc) buried beneath the pathways, and restrictions on works within a graveyard.

Digging started by the west door of the Church as this was felt to be a likely location of the fault, and on the second day the 2-core cabling was found. Digging switched to the south side of the Church, and this led to the 3-core cabling being found. A digger was brought in to trench the 15-20 metres between, and the faulty joint was eventually found, ironically less than a metre from the first hole. The two cables were then securely joined, and the PIR successfully completed.

## Stop Press

East Lothian Council's Education Department has kindly agreed, this summer, to carry out an audit of attitudes about/awareness of the Athelstaneford Flag Heritage Centre. The surveys will involve pupils, teachers and parents in local school clusters. Hopefully, the feedback will point to ways in which the Trust can better engage with local communities and attract more school visits to Athelstaneford.

## Contact Details

The Scottish Flag Trust is a registered charity (No: SC 002778) established in 1984 to maintain the Saltire Memorial and Flag Heritage Centre at Athelstaneford and to raise public awareness about the origins of Scotland's flag.

For information write to:-  
The Scottish Flag Trust, PO Box 84, Edinburgh EH3 8LG, or visit the website.

Key contacts are:-

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