



SALTIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH FLAG TRUST

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Saltire in the Sky Competition – A Major Success

In April 2010, the Trust launched a Scotland-wide photographic competition with the aim of bringing the traditional origins of the flag into a modern context. The challenge for photographers was to try to capture a dramatic image of a Saltire appearing in the skies above Scotland.

With prize money of £500 on offer, the Saltire in the Sky competition generated a great deal of interest and by the closing date of St Andrew's Day, 231 entries had been submitted. 30% of entries were from East Lothian, reflecting the fact that the county is the birthplace of the flag. The remaining entries came from all corners of the country, from Shetland to the Borders, and from Aberdeenshire to the Western Isles, while a small number came from Scots overseas!

The Judging Panel comprised:- Sheena Richardson, Provost of East Lothian Council; Rev Joanne Evans-Boiten, Minister at Athelstaneford; and Ian Torrance MBE, distinguished Scottish Press Photographer. The judges were looking for images that captured a clearly defined cross in bright colours, set in an unusual or atmospheric sky, as they felt this was in line with one of the best descriptions of the 9th century battle provided by medieval historian John



Provost Sheena Richardson and competition winner James Gordon at the launch of the Exhibition

Leslie (1527-1596) who wrote in his *Historie of Scotland*: *"ffor the Croce quhairvpon S.Andro deit....suddenlie apperit, in viue and bricht colouris, sett in the Aire"*.

On 23 February 2011, in Haddington Town House, the Trust launched its Saltire in the Sky Photographic Exhibition at which guests and winners got first sight of the colourful and eye-catching panels displaying 50 of the best entries. With the help of East Lothian's Library Services, the Exhibition then toured main libraries in the county over a 10-week period till May, during which time it was much admired by the public.

The following winners were selected by the Judging Panel:-

- **Overall Winner (£250) – James Gordon, Saltire over Loch Moidart, Ardnamurchan**
- **East Lothian Winner (£50) – Victor Beaumont, Saltire over Monk's Muir near Athelstaneford**
- **Rest of Scotland Winner (£50) – Bill McKenzie, Saltire over Crail Harbour**
- **Under 16 Winner (£50) – Anna Devine, Saltire over Prestonpans**



Commended entry by Derek Braid, Saltire over North Berwick

Gift Aid Message from the Treasurer

Over 100 Friends who give regularly are signed up for Gift Aid on all their donations, which means I can submit claims to Revenue & Customs who then give the Trust about 25% more. It's simple. All I need is your signature and address. For example last year, from all gift-aided regular donations and one-off donations, I was able to increase £2,800 of donations to over £3,600!

May I urge all Friends who are able (ie current UK taxpayers) to register with me for Gift Aid on their donations if they have not already done so (existing registrations are fine and stand until withdrawn). Please write or e-mail if you would like a Gift Aid authorisation form sent. I would also be pleased to hear of any change of address. May I thank you all for your past and continuing donations. Malcolm Duncan (email: mdneedless@aol.com)

Schools Audit

During the summer of 2010, East Lothian Council's Education Department undertook an audit of attitudes about/awareness of the Flag Heritage Centre at Athelstaneford. The audit involved children, parents and teachers in 5 Primary Schools in the North Berwick area, and the results were kindly compiled by Catriona McKinnon, HT at Athelstaneford Primary. The results from Aberlady, Gullane, Dirlerton and Law Primaries (sample 80) are revealing:-

- **very high recognition level regarding the Scottish flag (99%)**
- **good awareness that East Lothian is the birthplace of the Scottish flag (65%)**
- **low awareness of the story of the Saltire appearing above the 9th century battle (41%)**
- **very low awareness that there is a heritage centre in Athelstaneford (17%)**
- **high awareness that East Lothian road signs now refer to the birthplace (71%)**

It is apparent that more needs to be done to raise general awareness of the Flag Heritage Centre in East Lothian's schools, and the Trust is liaising with the Council as to how best this might be achieved. Ideas under consideration include holding a schools competition, and introducing a county-wide trail linking historic battle sites at Athelstaneford, Dunbar, Pinkie and Prestonpans.



Interest in Used Flags

The Trust continues to receive requests to purchase used flags that have flown at Athelstaneford. There are two flagpoles, one at the Saltire Memorial where a 5 ft x 4ft flag is flown, and one at the viewpoint where a 10 ft long vimpel flag with a Saltire at the hoist is flown. Charlie Blair replaces the flags at least twice a year when they have become worn and tattered. There is no set price, but donations are invited and a recent example realised £100.

Contact Details

The Scottish Flag Trust was established in 1984 to maintain the Saltire Memorial and to raise awareness about the origins of Scotland's flag. It is a registered charity (No: SC 0027778).

For information visit the website, or write to the Trust at PO Box 84, Edinburgh, EH3 8LG.

Key contacts are:-

David Williamson,
Chairman
(Tel: 01368.863239)

Charlie Blair, Custodian
(Tel: 01620.880297)

Malcolm Duncan, Treasurer
(Tel: 01620.880306)



Saltire Memorial

Some years ago, the main granite panel in the Saltire Memorial was defaced with painted slogans. Happily, efforts to remove the graffiti were largely successful, though a faint shadow remained in certain lights. However, as a result of solvents used, some of the black line work depicting the battle-scene was affected, while lettering on the smaller panel had also faded.

Gardner Molloy, a Cockenzie-based stonemason, was commissioned to refurbish the panels late in 2010. This was wholly successful, and today the Memorial looks in pristine condition. The work received a generous £500 grant from Haddington & District Community Council.

Trust Finances Restored

Just over a year ago, the Trust faced an emergency when routine testing for an electrical certificate needed for insurance purposes identified an earthing fault. This necessitated extensive excavation works within the Churchyard to locate and rectify the problem – the bill for which came to over £5,500, a massive drain on Trust funds.

Friends rallied to an appeal, and donations large and small began to flow in to try to restore the Trust's finances. Then, wholly unexpectedly, the Trust found itself a beneficiary of the wedding of Peter Murrell and Nicola Sturgeon MSP. The happy couple had asked their invited guests not to give presents but if they so wished to contribute to a wedding fund for three named charities, one of which was the Flag Trust, of which Peter is a long term supporter. The result was that the Trust received almost £3,000, and so, remarkably, the annual accounts to 31 December were able to show the finances not far short of the position before the crisis. The Trust would like to express thanks to everyone who contributed so generously.

☛ The Flag Heritage Centre will feature again this year in East Lothian Council's **Doors Open Day** programme which will be on **Sunday 11 September**. A Trustee will be in attendance between 1.00 and 6.00pm to answer visitors' questions about the 16th century Hepburn Doocot and about the 9th century battle that led to the adoption of the flag.

☛ East Lothian Council has just announced that the Trust's application for grant under the 2011-12 Civic Pride Fund programme has been successful. The funding package (£4,904) will allow new **interpretative display panels** to be installed this summer that will welcome and inform visitors to Athelstaneford Churchyard.