

**Journal of the Sydney Society
for Scottish History**



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Patron: Professor Michael Lynch, Sir William Fraser Professor of Scottish History and Palaeography, University of Edinburgh.

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Committee Member: Cecile Ramsay-Sharp.

The Sydney Society for Scottish History
Edmund Barton Chambers
Level 44 M.L.C. Centre
Sydney N.S.W. 2000
Australia
Tel. (02) 9220 6100 Fax. (02) 9232 3949

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INTRODUCTION

One of the attractions of any society is that it brings a group of people together to enjoy each other's company, exchange views about matters of common interest, tell of recent experiences and perhaps to hear a bit of gossip. In a real sense our monthly meetings have something of the character of a party or social gathering. In a large city societies such as ours take the place of the local pub or parish teas of close-knit communities. Scholarship is essentially a lonely activity and a regular meeting place where scholars, professional and amateur, can both recount their work, express their conclusions and share the experiences of others, does valuable work. All over Australia there are Historical Societies devoted to local history which, no doubt, have the same features, even if we would perhaps perceive their focus as somewhat narrower. All societies like to see themselves not as others see them.

Three of the papers in this issue were presented in 1996, two to commemorate historical events of that year and the fourth, the Geoffrey Ferrow Memorial lecture for 1993. Dr Elizabeth Bonner's, 'The "Auld Alliance" and the Betrothal of Mary Queen of Scots: Fact and Fable', was presented not only as the 1996 Geoffrey Ferrow Memorial Lecture, but also to commemorate the 701st anniversary of the signing of the ratification of the first formal treaty of alliance between France and Scotland on 23 February 1296 at Dunfermline. Associate-Professor Sybil M Jack's, 'The "Douce Burghers" of Sixteenth and Seventeenth century Scotland', has been largely rewritten since she presented it as the Geoffrey Ferrow Memorial lecture in February 1993. In September 1996, Neil Morrison returned from an extensive tour of Scotland where he researched the last fortnight of Robert Burns' life, presenting to the Society on his return, 'Burns at Brow', in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the great poet's death on 21 July 1796. Finally, in December of 1996, I presented my view of 'The Act of Union, 1707', which we have decided to present in the form of a debate, 'That the Act of Union was no bad thing!', at this year's Scottish week celebrations, in the light of the historical referendum in Scotland regarding the devolution.

Voluntary societies have to rely on the time of their officers. The production of the Society's *Journal* depends upon the co-editor, Dr Elizabeth Bonner, who has been recently pursuing her research in Europe. Apologising for her tardiness, she recounted the very full schedule which she followed from October 1994 until February 1996 during Visiting Fellowships at The Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at Edinburgh University, and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. These fellowships were financially supported by the 'Eleanor Sophia Wood Travelling Fellowship' for overseas research during 1995 from the University of Sydney, and a research grant by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, administered by the Sir Robert

Menzies Centre for Australian Studies at London University, as well as some assistance from the Anderson-Dunlop Fund at Edinburgh University to help defray costs of a research trip to France. During her tenure as a Visiting Fellow at Edinburgh University she presented papers, which had seen their beginnings at the Society meetings in Sydney: 'When was the Scottish New Year? Problems in Dating Some Sixteenth-Century Documents Concerning Scotland', and 'The Genesis of Henry VIII's 'Rough Wooing' of the Scots' at the Denys Hay Renaissance Seminar to the Department of History. At Cambridge she presented, 'The Recovery of St. Andrews Castle in 1547: French Naval Policy and Diplomacy in the British Isles', to the Tudor and Stuart Seminar and, 'Did the French Discover Australia? The First French Scientific Voyage of Discovery, 1503-1505' to the Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, London University. Finally, in August 1996, she returned to the UK to present a paper, 'The Marriage of Marie de Gueldres and James II of Scotland: a Review of some of the Unpublished Sources' at the Eighth International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature at St Hilda's College, Oxford, which she will present to the Society next year. All that, of course, put her months behind. However, I would not dare complain. If I did I might have to get this journal out myself and then the delays would be much more extensive.

The papers in this issue all read well — except of course I am not the one to judge my own paper. But the impact of actually listening to them delivered always seems more to me. The enthusiasm and personal involvement of the scholar who delivers the paper always adds something to the content. I therefore recommend attending history conferences, meetings, or evenings personally as something more than reading the paper afterwards.

Malcolm D. Broun
President