

ROBERTSON'S RANT

The Newsletter of the Clan Donnachaidh Society—Mid-Atlantic Branch



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BRANCH UPDATE

By Norman Dunkinson

Thanks to all members who voted in our online officer election in November! Congratulations to **Sam Kistler**, who won re-election as President, and to **Tom Due**, new Vice-President. Thanks to **Ron Bentz**, our outgoing Vice-President, for his service. I will be continuing in the office of Secretary/Treasurer as well. In accordance with parent society processes, the next officer elections will be held in or around November 2023.

Shortly before the elections in October, we activated online membership payment capability at our website, www.robertson.org. I am pleased to report that 23 members have joined or renewed since that time, with 15 of the 23, or 65%, doing so online. This data point clearly shows that online payment is a popular feature and we are pleased to offer it to our members.

We do not know how the games season will shape up given COVID-19. At this time, we know that the Southern Maryland Games, normally held in late April, have been cancelled. The website for the Colonial Highland Gathering—also known as the Fair Hill Scottish Games—is currently advertising the event to occur, as normal, in May. We'll share what we learn about the various games in our region with our members as information is obtained.

I hope you enjoy this “mega” issue—our largest ever. Mr. Fargo has been hard at work writing throughout the pandemic, outpacing my ability to keep up. This issue should serve to get us a bit more in lock-step!

Yours Aye, Norman

SCOTS HUMOR

Courtroom Witness

A solicitor was having trouble in court with one of the witnesses to a mugging in Perth. The witness was a rather pugnacious old Scot named Angus Reid.

“Are you acquainted with any of the jurors?” the solicitor asked.

“More than half,” old Angus grunted.

“Are you willing to swear that you know more than half of them?” the solicitor asked.

Old Angus glanced over at the jury box then said, “I’m willing to swear that I know more than all of them put together.”

Branch Officers

President:

Sam Kistler

Vice President:

Tom Due

Secretary/Treasurer:

Norman Dunkinson

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DARIEN COLONY SCHEME—1698

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

In 1695, the merchants of Scotland proposed setting up a merchant colony at Darien, which was halfway across the isthmus of Panama in central America. The English Parliament passed an Act to establish a trading company entitled "Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies". It initially attracted strong financial support in London and 300,000 pounds was raised to finance the company. Scots were to raise a similar amount to fully fund the enterprise. However, the East India Company had a monopoly on the Oriental trade and convinced Parliament that resident English investors could be prosecuted for breaking the Navigation Laws that prohibited all but English residents from engaging in trade with English colonies. The London funds vanished, thus leaving the Scots to raise funds only in Scotland. They successfully raised 220,000 pounds, approximately one fourth of all the ready capital in Scotland.

The plan for this mercantile scheme was to garner the wealth of both hemispheres through trade and transport the riches of Asia across the narrow neck of land at Panama from the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea. This would avoid the long and hazardous trip around either the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn. In July of 1698, the expedition of 1,200 colonists set sail from Leith in five ships. In November the ocean-weary colonists arrived at Darien and established a settlement named 'Caledonia'.

Spain considered Panama to be their possession and unfortunately King William wanted to keep friendly relations with Spain. William withdrew support from the new colony and forbid all English subjects from trading with the Scottish colony. In June 1699 Darien survivors evacuated the colony and headed for New York. Unaware of the abandonment of Darien, a second expedition of colonists arrived at Darien followed by 200 soldiers led by Alexander Campbell of Fonab from Breadalbane. As before, hunger and fever took their toll on the new colonists. When Spanish forces arrived and besieged the colony the survivors surrendered on April 1, 1700.

It was the end of Scotland's dream of becoming a colonial nation. The people of Scotland were furious when they learned of King William's treaty agreement with Spain which was blamed for the collapse of both the colony and the resultant poverty of the Scottish economy made worst by several years of poor harvests. This economic depression was a contributing factor to the later risings.

Postscript:

Colonel Campbell of Fonab was the son of Rev. Robert Campbell, the minister of Moulin, located east of Pitlochry. While there might have been investment in the Colony from individual clanfolk, there was little chance of any clan investment. With our 13th chief in exile in France and his confiscated estates in the hands of a government factor, what little money that was available from his tenants and clanfolk was being funneled through his ever-faithful sister Margaret and sent secretly to support him in France.

References:

Magnusson, Magnus, "Scotland, The Story of a Nation", New York, 2000, pp. 526-532.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

CEUD MILE FAILTE—100,000 WELCOMES!

We'd like to welcome the following new and returning members who joined or renewed since the last report:

Brendan B. Baggitt	Donald E. Behe	Betty M. Bentz	Lisa R. Brazzale
Thomas J. Due	Evan M. Duncan	Norman G. Dunkinson IV	Reena A. Fringer
Eric Jackson	C. Sam Kistler	Karen S. Layne	Carol A. Lucian
Sharon W. Mehl	Charles Reed	Charles E. Roberts	James Roberts
Harry L. Robertson Jr.	Jamye Robertson	J. Mott Robertson Jr.	John C. Robertson
Jonathan Robinson	Diane M. Smith	Kenneth R. Stiles	

PASSING OF JEAN ROBERTSON OF STRUAN

Please hold in your thoughts and prayers our Chief and his family in their sorrow, in which we all share. His dear sister Jean, a much loved personality, a leading light of our Clan, erudite historian, and devoted Secretary of the London & Southern Counties Branch of the Clan Society for many decades, died in hospital on December 19th after a short and sudden illness. May she rest in peace.

There will be a full tribute to this very special and gracious lady in our forthcoming Clan Annual.

Jean's cremation took place on Tuesday, February 9th. The main funeral, when the family plan to fulfil all Jean's wishes for a proper ceremony and gathering afterwards, will be held later in the year, as soon as permitted.

Members may access a video of the cremation service at www.obitus.com; Username: Leja1921; Password: 352774.



Jean Robertson. Image from donnachaidh.com.



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WILLIAM ROBERTSON (1860—1933)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

William Robert Robertson was born on January 29, 1860. William was one of seven children to Thomas and Ann Robertson. His father was the village postmaster and tailor.

William won his commission in 1888 by virtue of his brains rather than his bravery after nearly eleven years in the ranks. In the British Victorian Army, it was a traumatic and rare experience to make the transition from troop sergeant-major to an officer and gentleman. While the difference in education between a trooper and an officer were not great, the financial problems (purchase system) were formidable. This was especially true for Robertson as his commission was with the cavalry (3rd Dragoon Guards) serving in India. It was the class barrier, the vast difference in social position that made it difficult for a ranker to be accepted as an officer and gentleman by the other officers.

Despite this class barrier, Sir William Robertson was the only man in the Army's history to rise from being a trooper in the 16th Lancers to become a Field-Marshal and Chief of the Imperial General Staff from 1916-1918. He became the first Baron Robertson of Oakridge.

References:

Farwell, Byron, "Queen Victoria's Little Wars", New York, 1972, pp. 332-333.



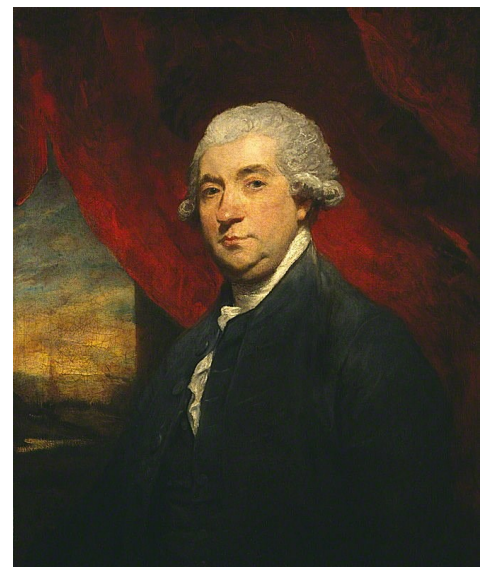
Sir William Robertson.
Image from
i5.walmartimages.com.

BOOK REVIEW—JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

James Boswell (1740-1795) was born in Edinburgh, the eldest son of a prominent Scottish judge Alexander Boswell, Lord Auchinleck. Graduating from Edinburgh University as a lawyer, he traveled to London and there met Dr. Samuel Johnson. Widely traveled in Europe, which was the fashion in the 1760s, young Boswell met Rousseau and Voltaire among many others in the literary circles of the time. In 1773, Boswell invited Johnson to leave London and visit Edinburgh. During that summer they went on a three month tour up the east coast of Scotland over to the Hebrides and returned down the west coast back to Edinburgh. Accommodations throughout their trip were provided by the local gentry in the spirit of highland hospitality when inns were unavailable.

Before setting out in mid-August, Boswell and Johnson attended a number of literary parties where politics, abolition of slavery in England, religion and philosophy were the topics of the day. Boswell introduced Johnson to Principal William Robertson of the University of Edinburgh, who served in that role from 1762 until his death in 1793. Robertson was a descendant of the Robertsons of Gladney in Fifeshire. Robertson was also a Presbyterian minister in the Church of Scotland and a renowned historian. Robertson escorted them on a tour of several places within Edinburgh and per Boswell he "fluently harangued Dr.



James Boswell. Image from
upload.wikimedia.org.

BOOK REVIEW—JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES (CONTINUED)

Johnson concerning scenes of his celebrated History of Scotland.”

After their return to Edinburgh on the night of November 9th they had breakfast on the 11th, with Principal Robertson. One of the topics of conversation was what they had learned about the 1745 rising during their tour and Robertson (ever the historian) said “A man, by talking with those of different sides, who were actors in it, and putting down all that he hears, may in time collect the materials of a good narrative. It was now full time to make such a collection as Dr. Johnson suggested; for many of the people who were then in arms, were dropping off; and both Whigs and Jacobites were now come to talk with moderation.”

Boswell’s diary of their journey, “Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides”, was published in 1785. Boswell later wrote a biography of Dr. Johnson which was published as “Life of Samuel Johnson” in 1791. Principal Robertson’s “History of Scotland” had been published in 1759 followed by his “The History of America” published in 1777.

Postscript: James Boswell’s book is full of interesting views on life in Scotland during the end of the traditional clan system and provides descriptions of the locations visited and conversations between Boswell, Johnson and their hosts during their journey. It takes you back 250 years to a simpler agrarian age, but they never visited our clan country.

References:

Boswell, James, “Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides”, 1785.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

DONALD ROBERTSON, 9TH OF STRUAN (C.1550—1591)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

In the 1580s, Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy and the MacGregors of Glenstrae and Roro were feuding over the legal ownership of lands on the north shore of Loch Tay. Campbell was determined to get feudal title and add the MacGregor lands to his estate so they would either chose to leave or become tenants. Eventually the Campbells of Breadalbane did acquire crown charters for these MacGregor lands along with the Donnachaidh lordship of Disher & Toyer on Loch Tay.

The clan lands of the barony of Fearnan on the north shore of Loch Tay were inhabited by our own clansmen and many MacGregor tenants. Under Campbell pressure, by a mutual bond dated March 20, 1584, our 8th chief, William Robertson of Struan bound himself to “cause all his tenants of the lands and barony of Ferney (Fearnan) serve the Earl of Argyle and Duncan Campbell (of Glenorchy) in hosting and hunting.” Eventually these lands were lost to our clan and mostly acquired by the Campbells of Breadalbane and Menzies of Weem.

When William died in 1588 without issue, his younger brother Donald became our 9th chief. Unfortunately, Donald did not have a crown charter for our clan lands as his brother William had alienated some of the estate by gifting it to James Menzies on his marriage to Menzies’ daughter. Since William had done this without the consent of the King, Donald’s rights to his estates were still under forfeiture. Donald married twice. To his first wife Janet Stewart around 1575 he had one son Robert, who succeeded him as chief. Secondly, he married Beatrix Farquharson in 1587 and had

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DONALD ROBERTSON, 9TH OF STRUAN (C.1550—1591) (CONTINUED)

two more sons who died without issue.

Macgregor bitterness on being deprived of possession of their lands brought reprisals and vengeance on Duncan Campbell's lands. Instigated by the Campbells, an Act was passed by the Privy Council in Edinburgh on February 4, 1589, which authorized the Campbells a commission of 'fire and sword' against the MacGregors for the murder and cutting off the head of John Drummond.

Again under Campbell pressure, a subsequent bond between Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy and our chief dated October 16, 1590 stated that "Donald Robertson of Strowan, finding that divers of the Clangregour occupied his lands and barony of Fernay, in the lordship of Descheor and Toyer and Sheriffdome of Perth, against his will, so that he could not well remove them, binds himself and his heirs, if by the assistance of Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenurquhay, he can remove them orderly, to put in their stead tenants bound to serve the said Sir Duncane in hosting, hunting and obedience, as the tenants of the said lands did previously, the said Sir Duncane being bound to defend the said tenants in their possessions."

Continued Campbell encroachments on MacGregors and on their neighboring landlords (including our clan) eventually forced the MacGregors to leave their former hereditary lands. Many eventually migrated northward beyond Glenlyon into western Atholl and settled on the largely uninhabited forested areas of Clan Menzies on the northern side of Loch Rannoch. The 1590s were a troublesome time in Atholl as there were continuing raids from caterans and unfriendly clans. "The Privy Council's Records at this period fairly bristled with Acts of Caution in which the Atholl lairds are bound in very heavy sums of money not to harm each other or their neighbours." These Cautions resulted in wadsets (mortgages) needed both to cover financial losses from cateran raids and to pay fines assessed on them for the actions of their unruly tenants. In addition to ongoing clan feuds, religion also played a part in the turbulence as some clans were Protestant while others were mostly Catholic (Campbell vs. Donnachaidh).

On Donald's death in May 1591, the chiefship went to his eldest son Robert (1580-1630) who was only eleven. Thanks to a generous and wealthy kinsman, who purchased the wadsets on the clan lands, the forfeited estates were restored to Robert (10th chief) under a Crown Charter dated January 14, 1600.

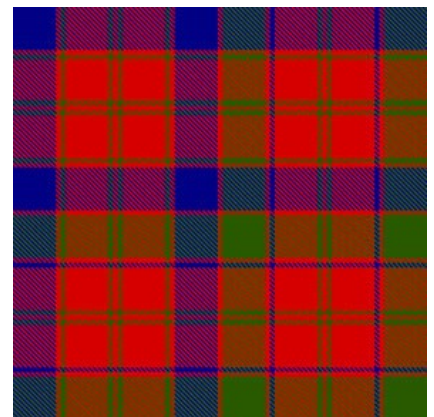
Eventually the King's Lieutenant for Scotland (Earl of Argyll) was successful in his relentless campaign against the MacGregors. After the Battle of Glenfruin between the MacGregors and Colquhouns, (won by the MacGregors) Argyll succeeded. An Act was approved by the Privy Council dated April 3, 1603 which "proscribed the name of the clan, and denounces death to any calling himself Gregor or M'Gregor."

References:

Campbell, Duncan, *"The Lairds of Glenlyon: Historical Sketches"*, Perth, 1886, pp. 189-203.

Reid, J. Robertson, *"A Short History of the Clan Robertson, Stirling, 1933, pp. 44, 107.*

Robertson, James, *"Chiefs of Clan Donnachaidh 1275-1749"*, Perth, 1929, p. 51-52.



ROBERT ROBERTSON, 10TH OF STRUAN (1580—1630)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

On the accession of our 10th chief on the death of his father in 1591, he got into continued tangles with the Campbells over his MacGregor tenants. Robert married Agnes, daughter of Macdonald of Keppoch and had a family of two daughters and four sons: Alexander, who became the 11th chief; Donald, later known as the 'Tutor of Struan'; Duncan of Drumachuine, from whom our current chief descends; and James. Robert was a poor manager of his finances, and incurred large debts. He got a fresh start in 1600 when his wadsets (mortgage debts) were paid off by a loyal Edinburgh merchant and kinsman.

Throughout his tenure as chief, there was an ongoing struggle between the MacGregors and Campbells which spilled over into the clan estates. The MacGregors held their land by 'right of the sword' and had few charters for their ancestral lands. The Campbells believed in acquiring charters by whatever means possible to expand their land holdings.

After the battle of Glen Fruin in February 1603 between clans Gregor and Colquhoun, the Privy Council of King James I of England outlawed the MacGregors after the massacre. In 1604, the Macgregor chief Allaster of Glenstrae and eleven chieftains were executed for having been at the battle and for various crimes committed against the lands and tenants of Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy. Argyll, the King's Lieutenant for Scotland, issued a commission of fire and sword against anyone named Macgregor.

John Campbell of Lawers presented the head of John Dhu McAllaster Breac of Stronfearnan to the Privy Council in 1611. At his death, there was an existing feudal feu of the lands of Stronfearnan due from our chief and Campbell pursued Struan before the Privy Council for a nineteen year's lease on his victim's feu. The case was based on terms within the 1603 Act of Council which promised such a lease in favor of the slayer of every outlaw named MacGregor who happened to possess lands. For Struan to get the lease rights to his own land restored, he had to pay compensation to Campbell and was ordered to evict the unfortunate widow and children along with her servants and tenants.



Central Perthshire. Image from ebay.co.uk.

In 1613, the MacGregors of Roro protected their lands from the enemies of their name and race, by granting a renunciation of their lands of Roro in favor of Duncan Menzies of Comrie. Many dispossessed MacGregors migrated to the

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ROBERT ROBERTSON, 10TH OF STRUAN (C.1580—1630) (CONTINUED)

northern side of Loch Rannoch and lived in relative safety on the Menzies lands there with our clan on the southern side.

There are several reported instances where Campbells entered Atholl searching for MacGregors. At the north end of Glen Bruar is the Minigaig Pass on the old drove road is a spot known as 'Sigh a Choin Dubh' (fairy hill of the black dog) which recalls an incident where a party of Campbells used their fierce black dogs to hunt MacGregor quarry. These bloodhounds would track MacGregors by following their scent.

Reid's book records another instance in greater detail that occurred east of the village of Moulin in the barony of the Reids of Straloch. A large party of armed Campbells from Argyll had arrived at Moulin and stopped for refreshments while tracking some MacGregors with two of their fierce black dogs. As the weather was stormy, the Campbells decided to stay the night rather than continue on west into Strathardle where they were to join up with more Campbells. A Ferguson saw them at the inn and sent his servant to alert the Strathardle folks of the danger. The next day, the Campbell party reached the hamlet of Garaigh-riabhach and decided to spend the night, just west of the Robertsons of Kindrogan. The local MacGregors climbed the cliffs to safety in a cave on Kindrogan Rock. The Campbells chose the house of a Robertson of the Straloch family to quarter for the stormy night. Not pleased that his house had been taken over by these uninvited guests, but unable to do much about it, Robertson proceeded to be a good host and entertained these guests with whisky until they were drunk. Offering to provide bedding for his guests, he sent his servants to retrieve the plaids of his MacGregor friends from the cave. The Campbells settled in for the night with the extra plaids. Robertson, before leaving to sleep at a neighbor's house, convinced the outside sentries who were on guard that the two black dogs would be better off inside out of the rain. The sentries agreed and put the dogs inside. Not long after, the dogs smelled the MacGregor scent on the sleeping Campbells and a violent fight ensued as the Campbells "certain that the MacGregors were upon them, drew their dirks and in the dark proceeded to stab, slash and cut whoever was near them." The following morning the battered Campbells were mourning the loss of their two dogs when they were greeted by their host who informed them that the Baron Reid of Straloch with all his men were coming from Strathardle and the Baron Fergusson with his men from Atholl were trailing behind them. Faced with two hostile forces, the outnumbered Campbells offered Robertson a reward if he would guide them to safety. Robertson led them over the Kindrogan hills and they were able to escape, thus a battle and the resulting bloodshed were avoided.

Robert died during the reign of King Charles I in 1630. Prior to his death, Robert had resigned his estates to the Crown. In February 1630, Robert's eldest son Alexander received a new Charter under the Great Seal which restored the barony estates to him.

References:

Campbell, Duncan, "The Lairds of Glenlyon: Historical Sketches", Perth, 1886, p. 151.

Kerr, John, "Life in the Atholl Glens", Perth, 1993, p. 108.

Reid, J. Robertson, "A Short History of Clan Robertson", Stirling, 1933, pp.44, 110-118.

Robertson, James, "Chiefs of Clan Donnachaidh 1275-1749", Perth, 1929, pp. 52-53.

FORMATION OF NORTH WEST MOUNTED POLICE

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

In 1867 the four British provinces in North America federated into the Dominion of Canada. West of these provinces, the Hudson's Bay Company held sway. On March 9, 1869, a bargain was struck between the Hudson's Bay Company and the new Dominion of Canada. Canada would buy most of the prairie lands west of Ontario and forestall any American attempts to add any of this territory to their recent purchase of Alaska. During the first quarter of the 1870s, the Hudson Bay Company sent reports to the Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada, Sir John MacDonal, in Ottawa that complained that there was no law and order as nearly 500 American rogues (mostly discharged Civil War Union veterans) from Montana had taken up residence and were trading whiskey and repeating rifles for furs. Captain W. F. Butler reported that "The region is without law, order or security for life or property; robbery and murder for years have gone unpunished; Indian massacres are unchecked; and all civil and legal institutions are entirely unknown." His situational report to militia Adjutant General, Colonel Patrick Robertson-Ross, resulted in the Colonel's request to Ottawa for a full regiment of 550 mounted men. The House of Commons passed an Act in May 1873 that established a mounted police force and the following spring, 300 men road west to bring law and order to the central prairie. Colonel Robertson-Ross had urged the Mounties to adopt red coats to distinguish them from another green-uniformed Canadian army regiment that was not trusted by the western Indians. He stated that "Animosity is rarely, if ever, felt towards disciplined soldiers wearing Her Majesty's uniform in any portion of the British Empire."



Colonel Patrick Robertson-Ross. Image from biographi.ca.

Colonel Patrick Robertson-Ross (1828-1883) was born in Scotland, the second son of Judge Lord Patrick Robertson and was educated in Edinburgh. He served in the Kaffir wars and the Crimean War before arriving in Canada in 1864 for duty against the Fenians and the Red River rebellion. On the death of his uncle, General Hugh Ross in June 1864, Robertson inherited his uncle's property of Glenmoidart near Inverness and changed his name to Robertson-Ross. He retired as a Major General and upon his death on July 23, 1883 was buried in Inverness.

References:

Time-Life Books, Inc., "The Canadians", Chicago, 1977, pp. 150-155.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.



North West Mounted Police Badge. Image from ipinimg.com.

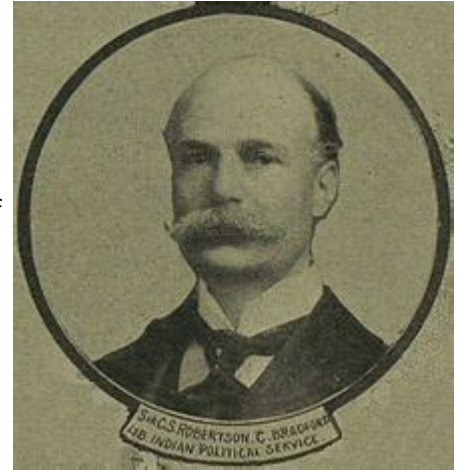
ROBERTSON'S RANT

GEORGE S. ROBERTSON (1852—1916)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Born on October 22, 1852, George Scott Robertson was the son of a London pawnbroker. Educated at Westminster Hospital Medical School, he entered the Indian Medical Service at the age of twenty-six. During the Second Afghan War (1879-1880) he served with the Kabul Field Force.

In 1888 he was attached to the Indian Foreign Office and assigned to the State of Gilgit. As Surgeon-Major in 1895 he was the British Agent to the independent States of Gilgit and neighboring Chitral along the India/Afghanistan border. On the death of the ruler of Chitral, as the British political officer Robertson arrived with an escort of 100 men of the 14th Sikhs and 300 Kashmiri light infantry under the command of six British officers to oversee the transfer of power. Hostility from local tribesmen led to six week siege of his force in Chitral Fort which ended on April 20 1895 when a relieving force dispersed the armed insurgents. Robertson was awarded a Knight Commander (KCSI) in the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India for his service.



Sir George S. Robertson. Image from en.wikipedia.org.

A chronicle of his experiences in Kafiristan was published in his book "The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush" in 1896. Robertson continued in the India Service until his retirement in 1899. After his return to Great Britain, Sir George Robertson was elected to the House of Commons in 1906 and served until his death on January 1, 1916.

References:

Farwell, Byron, "Queen Victoria's Little Wars", New York, 1972, pp. 289-309.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

MALCOLM S. TONNOCHY (1841—1882)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Malcolm Struan Tonnochy was born on December 5, 1841 in British India to Thomas and Caroline (Kemball) Tonnochy. His paternal grandfather, Thomas Tonnochie was a Bengal Army Sergeant Major serving in India. His paternal grandmother and his maternal grandparents were Indian. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, he chose to leave school and by passing a Colonial Service competitive exam was appointed to the Hong Kong Civil Service in 1862.

Tonnochy held several minor positions including coroner, police magistrate and Assistant Harbour Master. These positions led to serving as the Superintendent of the Victoria Gaol (1876-1882), Acting Colonial Secretary and Treasurer (1880-1882) then serving as a judge in the Royal Navy's Vice Admiralty Court of Hong Kong from 1879 to 1882.

Tonnochy died unmarried in 1882 after serving as acting Administrator of Hong Kong in early 1882 when the Administrator (Governor) left office. He is buried in the Hong Kong cemetery and there is a street, Tonnochy Road, named after him.

References: Multiple Wikipedia searches.

JAMES MACLAGAN (1728—1805)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

James MacLagan was born on September 8, 1728 on the estate of Ballechin near Strathtay, Perthshire. His father, Donald McClagon was a farmer. James matriculated at the University of St. Andrews during the 1750/1751 session but did not graduate. He was subsequently ordained as a minister in the Church of Scotland by the presbytery of Dunkeld on February 6, 1760.

His first posting as a minister was in Amulree, Perthshire from 1760-1764. He was appointed chaplain to the Black Watch (42nd Regiment of Foot) from 1764 to 1788 during which time he served in the Isle of Man, Ireland and in the American War of Independence. He married Catherine Stuart, daughter of the minister of Killin, on June 7, 1784 and they had four sons and three daughters. He composed the original Gaelic words to the music of "Garb of Old Gaul" composed by General John Reid of Straloch, which became known as the 'Slow March' of the Black Watch as early as 1769.

On leaving the Black Watch, MacLagan returned to Atholl and served as the minister of Blair Atholl and Strowan parish until his death on May 3, 1805. He compiled the Blair Atholl and Strowan parish entry for the First Statistical Account of Scotland published in 1792.

He is also remembered for his compilation of 250 manuscripts containing some 630 separate items of song and poetry collected or transcribed by him. These are mainly in Scottish Gaelic and were sourced by him from many areas of highland Scotland as well as from his contacts in Ireland and Isle of Man during his military career. In October 1760 he was contacted by James Macpherson, who is known as the "translator" of the Ossian cycle of epic poems which were published individually beginning in 1760 and in a collected edition in 1765. While serving as the minister of Amulree, MacLagan sent Macpherson some Gaelic poems which were part of his collection. In January 1761 he received written thanks from Macpherson for sending these Gaelic poems. MacLagan recalled in 1800 that he had sent Macpherson about 13 poems. His collection (now known as the McLagan Collection) was donated to the University of Glasgow in 1910 and is housed in their Library of Special Collections.

References:

Kerr, John, "Church and Social History of Atholl", Perth & Kinross Libraries, 1998, pp. 68-70; Multiple Wikipedia searches.

English translation of a poem from the MacLagan collection from clangregor.com:

Little sorrow or grief do I feel
 As I have seen that they are well
 They are the people I love and who are precious to me.
 The lineage of that prosperous John
 The fearless lions
 They have given me many weapons and jewels.
 The blood-line of the hundreds of warriors
 Trained to be entirely capable
 With whom I parted yesterday in the ravines.
 Of them was Red-haired Alasdair
 And Black-haired John of the hard blades
 With which the rout was driven ten miles.
 The strong and fair-haired [altern.: lucky] man
 Of the company of blades
 Who would stretch the yew-bow – not stingy is he.
 The people of armour and blades
 Who would never be niggardly
 It was not love-making that you did upon waking.
 You did not avoid a drink
 And did not hoard gold
 Elegance would be no challenge for their kind. (?)
 While I was in your retinue
 If my strength ever failed me
 My wish would be to be buried in your soil.
 Folk who would chose the weapons
 And the women of the most pleasing form
 At your bed-time, your wish was to lay down next to them.
 Early in the dewy morning
 Your business was no matter for mockery
 You went out to climb the peaks.
 After your (gun) hammers had fired
 Antlered deer would be wounded
 And the lifeless hides would be torn from them.
 Clan Gregor of the blades
 Who would strike each camp with a raid
 That people are not sordid, they are royal.

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ROBERTSON WHISKY

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Located on Atholl Road, Robertsons of Pitlochry was founded by Allan and Isla Robertson in 1961. Allan and Isla sold the business and retired in 2013. I first met Allan in the 1980s on one of my first trips to Scotland. Then it was mainly a grocery store with a side business in the sale of beers and malt whisky. On another visit, I attended the local Rotary Club meeting at Fisher's Hotel with Allan. He introduced me to a group of local clansmen and I presented their Club with a Rotary flag from my Club in Luray, Virginia.



Robertson's Whisky. Image from whiskyparadise.com.

On a subsequent visit, Allan told me about Robertsons 'Yellow Label' Dundee whisky. This Dundee whisky firm of John Robertson & Son opened in 1827. The firm's headquarters in Dundee was an imposing Jacobethan-style building, four stories high and complete with turrets and crow-stepped gables. The company was purchased by a larger distiller in 1916.

First produced before World War I, this Robertsons blended Scotch with its bright yellow colored label helped to distinguish the brand from other brands bearing the Robertson name. Production of this blend ended in the 1980s. The firm also produced Piper's Dram and BEB (Best Ever Bottled) blends.

As with all businesses, the firm had advertising products for display and sale. G & HW Hawksley of Sheffield, England produced the flasks. I eventually purchased and still use one of these 1920s glass and leather hip flasks with a pewter drinking cup base.

References: Multiple Wikipedia searches.

BATTLE OF ROSLIN—1303

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

It is almost impossible to describe this unheralded Scots victory over the English without placing the battle in context with the many layered political and factional rivalries of the times.

William Wallace had resigned as the Guardian of Scotland after his defeat at Falkirk on July 22, 1298. Two new Regents were chosen by the Scottish nobility to lead Scotland: John (Red Comyn) Earl of Buchan and Robert Bruce (who became the Earl of Carrick and Lord of Annandale on the death of his father in 1304). The Comyn nobles were allied with and supported the deposed King John Balliol. Despite short truces between the warring nations, the Scots captured Stirling Castle in 1299 and English armies ravaged the lowlands of Scotland in 1301 and 1302. With the prospect of King John Balliol being released from Papal captivity and returning to Scotland, Robert Bruce changed sides in January 1302 and submitted to King Edward.

In February 1303 at King Edward's direction, Sir John Segrave (Governor General of Edinburgh Castle) led a cavalry force estimated by the chroniclers of the times as 30,000 men into Scotland to test the strength of Scottish forces west of Edinburgh. Alerted to this unexpected invasion by the Prior of Mont Lothian, a hastily raised force of 8,000 men was led by the Red Comyn and Sir Simon Fraser. Segrave split his forces into three divisions to attack and capture three targets (Borthwick Castle, Dalhousie Castle and Roslin) along the River Esk. The mobile battle tactics used

BATTLE OF ROSLIN—1303 (CONTINUED)

by the Scots have led historians to believe that Wallace was advising them. The Scots assembled their forces and launched a surprise attack at dawn on February 24 and destroyed one force, then attacked and defeated the second, and before the end of the day wiped out the third. Estimates at the time believed that only ten percent of the English forces returned to England. The “sonsofscotland.co.uk” website provides a description of the battles.

King Edward led another English army into Scotland in May. A portion of the army was sent to the southwest, led by his son and the Earl of Ulster (Bruce’s father-in-law) to go after the Comyn forces. Wallace reverted to guerilla raids into Annandale and into Cumberland in hopes of bringing Edward’s army back to the lowlands. Edward’s main force (accompanied by Robert Bruce) continued up the eastern seaboard of Scotland with the Grampian Mountains on his eastern flank to Elgin without serious opposition for the purpose of deterring anyone from joining a potential Scottish rebellion. After this show of force, Edward returned south and wintered his army at Dunfermline. In February 1304, Comyn and the other Scottish resistance leaders (except for Wallace) sought peace and surrendered to King Edward and accepted temporary banishment. Edward then captured Stirling Castle in July 1304 and along with Robert Bruce returned to London.



Battle of Roslin Memorial. Image from [Wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Roslin).

The betrayal and subsequent execution of William Wallace in London on August 23, 1305, along with King Edward’s decision to appoint his nephew John of Brittany to be the Viceroy of Scotland in September 1305 to govern Scotland under English laws inspired a new desire for freedom in Scotland.

Robert Bruce realized that his chance to rule Scotland with Edward’s support was over and returned to Scotland to claim his inheritance. In the hope of organizing a united resistance to the new English rulers and to reconcile with the Red Comyn their rival claims to the throne, Bruce met Comyn at the Greyfriars church in Dumfries on February 10, 1306. They argued and with Comyn’s murder in the church, the die was cast for Bruce. With the support of the Scottish Bishops, six weeks later he was crowned King at Scone on March 27, 1306, without the support of the Comyn faction.

Postscript: John of Strathbogie, the Anglo-Norman 10th Earl of Atholl was a strong supporter of Robert Bruce’s claim to the throne but in the above narrative of 1303-1304 our clan and the other men of Atholl played no part in supporting the Comyn faction against England. The Earl was present at Bruce’s coronation. After Bruce’s defeat at the battle of Methven in 1306, the Earl was captured by the English, convicted as a traitor and executed in London.

In 1313, the deposed King John Balliol died and the Comyn faction supported his son Edward Balliol’s claim to the kingdom. John, 11th Earl of Atholl had married a Comyn heiress. The night before the battle of Bannockburn this earl changed his allegiance and treacherously sacked Bruce’s supply depot at Cambuskenneth Abbey and went over to the English side. He was the last of the Strathbogie Earls of Atholl and he never returned to Scotland.

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ROBERTSON'S RANT

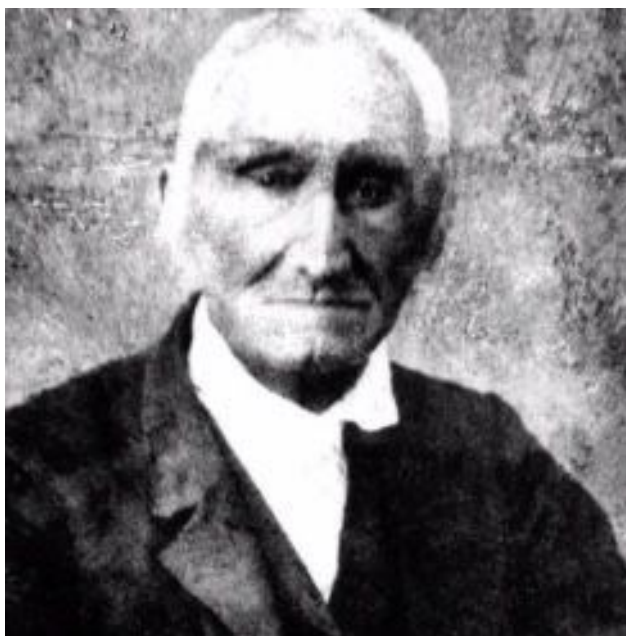
TEMPLETON REID (1789—1851)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

In 1794, President Thomas Jefferson suspended the production of U.S. gold coins due to these undervalued coins being melted for their bullion value. At that time the ratio of gold to silver was 15 to 1 in the U.S. versus 15.75 to 1 in Europe. Up until 1830, the coinage circulating in the U.S. was limited to underweight silver and gold foreign coins and privately issued bank notes.

In the 1820s, trade suffered due to the lack of sound money. With few coins in circulation most trade had to be done by barter. Businessman Templeton Reid was a skilled silversmith, blacksmith, watchmaker, jeweler and gunsmith in the state capital of Milledgeville, Georgia. He saw an opportunity by buying raw gold from the miners, refine it and produce coins of proven value.

In July 1830 Templeton Reid struck the first private gold coinage ever produced in the U.S. Later that year, he moved his operation to Gainesville to be closer to the gold mines which had opened in 1828. Although his weights were accurate, his assays were anonymously reported to be a wee bit short of claimed value. The Georgia Courier, the local newspaper, crucified him for this and the public lost confidence in his coins. Reid closed his mint in October 1830 after having produced less than 1,600 coins in \$2.50, \$5 and \$10 denominations. The enterprise had been a failure as he had spent more to make the press and engrave the dies than he made from the sale of the coins. He then moved to Montgomery Alabama and married his wife Elizabeth Moulton in 1832. They moved to Columbus Georgia in 1836 and Reid opened the Reid Cotton Gin Manufacturing company and continued making rifles. He later resurfaced as a coiner in 1849 making a few gold \$10 and \$25 coins in Columbus using California gold. Sadly, his business failed in 1850 and the assets were seized by the court in a debt collection lawsuit.



Templeton Reid. Image from findagrave.com.

The U.S. established a mint in Dahlonega, Georgia in 1838 to convert the raw gold dust and nuggets from the mines into coinage. In 1842, the Philadelphia Mint tested some of his coins and found that they contained more gold than the face value indicated. The tested coins were .942 fine versus the Mint's .900 standard.

In 1851 he designed, built and patented an improved cotton-gin and was bound for the World's Fair in London. Before he left for London, he fell to his death from a high bank along the Chattahoochee River while out walking. His body was buried in an unmarked grave in the Linwood Cemetery in Columbus.

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BATTLE OF DUNBAR—1650

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

With the execution of King Charles I in January 1649, England became a republic while Scotland recognized Charles' son as King Charles II and proclaimed him King of Great Britain on February 5, 1649. On June 24, 1650, Charles landed in Scotland. That same day, Oliver Cromwell was appointed Lord General of the New Model Army by the English Council of State.

In July 1650 Cromwell decided to strike first and mustered an army of 12,000 men at Newcastle with the aim of taking Edinburgh. A Royalist army had been mobilized near Edinburgh to support Charles's claim to the English throne. Sir David Leslie commanded a force of about 22,000 men and had entrenched the Scottish army behind a fortified line between Leith and the Canongate. As the English army advanced into Scotland, the Scots had enacted a scorched-earth policy and Cromwell was forced to haul supplies to his army from the English fleet. Continual stormy weather in August forced Cromwell to fall back to Dunbar, fifty kilometers east of Edinburgh, where he could replenish his supplies and ship his sick and wounded back to England.

Not content to watch the Parliamentary army retreat, the Covenanter Royalist army left their positions guarding Edinburgh and followed Cromwell to Dunbar. Oliver Cromwell was in a bad position and expected to be beaten by the larger Royalist Presbyterian force led by Leslie. On September 2nd, the Covenanter clerics with Leslie forced the general to make a fatal error and leave their high ground defensive positions on Doon Hill and then launch an attack across the Brock Burn the following day. Just before dawn on September 3 Cromwell's army launched a surprise attack with six cavalry regiments and three foot regiments on the sleeping Scots. By mid-morning, some ten thousand Scots were taken prisoner (half of them wounded and later released on parole), three to four thousand were dead and the remaining Scots escaped to regroup at Stirling Castle. After the battle, Cromwell was then faced with the serious problem of housing and feeding all these prisoners in addition to his own army. The remaining prisoners were marched back to England where about two thousand died of starvation or disease and the rest were either enslaved in the English salt mines or shipped as slaves to the West Indies plantations.

The English Parliamentary army then consolidated its grip on the lowlands and on Christmas Eve 1650 Edinburgh castle surrendered. On New Year's Day 1651, Charles was crowned in a Presbyterian church at Scone. In July King Charles II decided to invade England. Leslie's newly raised army of twelve thousand marched south into England and took the city of Worcester. On September 3 (the anniversary of the Dunbar defeat) Leslie was soundly defeated at the Battle of Worcester by Cromwell's army of thirty thousand. King Charles II was able to escape the battlefield and fled to France.

This set the stage for nine years of English occupation and efforts by General Monk to subjugate Scotland (known as the Interregnum, 1651-1660) and our clan's involvement in the abortive Glencairn rebellion of 1653-54.

References:

Browne, James, "History of the Highlands", Glasgow, 1838, Vol. 2, pp. 61, 72-74.

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Multiple Wikipedia searches.

ROBERTSON'S RANT

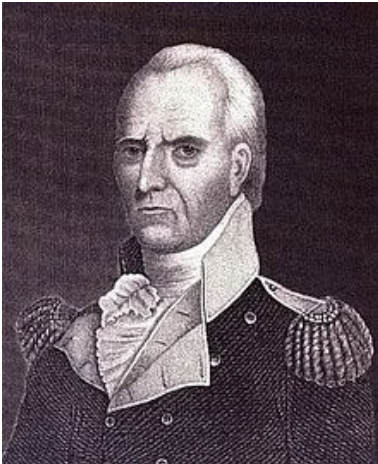
GENERAL JOHN M. STARK (1728-1822)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Who was Major General John Stark, the 'Hero of Bennington' in the American Revolution?

The son of Archibald and Eleanor Stark, John Stark was born in 1728. His father was born in Glasgow and on his family moving to Londonderry Ireland, he met and married his wife. They immigrated in 1720 to Boston and then to a frontier settlement in New Hampshire which was eventually renamed Londonderry.

John Stark's frontiersman career began in 1752. During a hunting and trapping trip with his older brother William and several other men, they were captured by Abenaki warriors. Before being taken back to Quebec, his brother was able to escape. While a prisoner, he was made to run a gauntlet of warriors armed with sticks. He impressed the chief of the tribe by grabbing a stick from one of the warriors and fighting them. Because of his bravery he was adopted into the tribe. Stark lived with them over the winter until the next spring when he was included in an exchange of prisoners for a ransom of \$103 Spanish dollars.



During the French and Indian Wars (1756-1763), Stark began his military career as a Second Lieutenant serving with Major Robert Rogers. As a member of Rogers Rangers, he learned valuable combat experience and gained an in-depth knowledge of the northern frontier of the American colonies. Stark retired as a Captain after the war ended.

He married Elizabeth 'Molly' Page and was the father of eleven children. His eldest son Caleb (born 1759) and his brother William served with him during the Revolutionary War.

With the start of the American Revolution at the Battle of Lexington and Concord in April 1775, Stark returned to military service as a Colonel in the New Hampshire militia.

General John M. Stark. Image from en.wikipedia.org.

He was given command of both the 1st New Hampshire Regiment and the 3rd New Hampshire Regiment led by James Reed. Stark marched his men south to Boston in support of Colonel William Prescott of the Continental Army's request for reinforcements. Prescott had formed a line on the heights of Breed's Hill. Stark arrived and placed his New Hampshire minutemen between the low ground by the Mystic River beach and to the left of Breed's Hill behind hastily constructed fortifications. Three separate British attacks were repulsed before Colonel Prescott eventually ordered a withdrawal. The Battle of Bunker Hill was over, but the siege of Boston by the British continued. After General Washington's arrival, Stark was offered a command in the Continental Army and sent with his men as part of an invasion force to Canada in the spring of 1776.

After the defeat of the Continental Army in Canada, Stark and his men returned to the New Jersey colony and fought in the battles of Princeton and Trenton. Ordered home to recruit additional New Hampshire men, he learned that another colonel with no combat experience had been promoted to Brigadier General over him. He resigned his commission in the Continental Army in disgust. Four months later, he was offered a commission as a Brigadier General of the New Hampshire Militia. Ordered by the Continental Army to reinforce the army at Saratoga New York, Stark refused and led his men to meet up with General Seth Warner's Vermont militia (the Green Mountain Boys) and block the Hessians from reinforcing General Burgoyne at Saratoga. Prior to the battle, Stark addressed his men "The enemy are ours or

GENERAL JOHN M. STARK (1728-1822) (CONTINUED)

this night Molly Stark sleeps a widow.” The ensuing battle at Bennington Vermont on August 16 1777 was a success. The Hessians were routed and the supplies they were bringing to the main British army at Saratoga were captured. This victory essentially cut off Burgoyne’s escape route back to Canada.

In 1809, the veterans of Bennington held a reunion to commemorate the battle, and Major General Stark, then 81 years old was unable to attend. His letter to his comrades closed with “Live free or die: Death is not the worst of evils.” In 1945, the motto “Live Free or Die” became the New Hampshire state motto.

Postscript: The 1937 novel “Northwest Passage” by Kenneth Roberts gives an excellent account of Rogers Rangers and the hardships they endured while the colonists were fighting the French and their Indian allies.

References:

Roberts, Kenneth, “Northwest Passage”, Doubleday, New York, 1967

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

BATTLE OF CULBLEAN—1335

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

In September 1335, Sir Andrew Murray, was appointed a Guardian of Scotland. He was the son of the Scottish patriot Andrew Murray who with William Wallace had led the victorious Scottish forces that defeated the English at Stirling Bridge on September 11, 1297 and been mortally wounded during the battle.

In November 1335, Murray led an army of about 1,100 men north along the eastern coast against the pro-English forces led by the titular Earl of Atholl, David of Strathbogie. Murray was a supporter of King Robert the Bruce’s young son King David II. Strathbogie was a supporter of Edward Balliol, son of the former King John Balliol, who had the military support of King Edward III of England. Strathbogie, who had been appointed commander of the English forces in the north of Scotland, had laid siege to Kildrummy Castle in Aberdeenshire with an army of about 3,000 men. The castle was held by Lady Christina Bruce, wife of Sir Andrew Murray in the name of King David II. Warned of Murray’s approaching army to relieve the siege, Strathbogie moved south to intercept Murray at the forest of Culblean. On Saint Andrew’s day, November 30, 1335, Murray split his army into two units. The frontal unit led by Sir William Douglas of Liddesdale blocked Strathbogie’s southern march. Strathbogie’s men attacked Douglas’ smaller force and once committed, Murray’s men attacked the exposed flank and the English forces broke. Strathbogie was killed in a last stand along with his Comyn allies.

Although a relatively small battle, its significance was that it cleared the English from northern Scotland and effectively ended Balliol/Comyn family hopes of regaining the Scottish throne. In addition it removed the Strathbogie earls from Atholl and Douglas of Liddesdale was granted the vacant earldom of Atholl in 1341 by King David II. On Douglas’ death without a male heir in August 1353, the earldom again reverted to the Crown. The earldom was then granted to Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany and third son of King Robert II.

References: Cowan, Samuel, “Three Celtic Earldoms”, Edinburgh, 1909, pp. 19-22; Fisher, Andrew, “William Wallace”, Edinburgh, 2002, p. 116. National Trust for Scotland, “Bannockburn”, 1987, p. 27; Robertson, James, “Chiefs of Clan Donnachaidh 1275-1749”, Perth, 1929, p. 42.



Image from ipinim.com

**CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY
MID-ATLANTIC BRANCH**

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The Clan Donnachaidh Society is a world-wide organization dedicated to the preservation of our Highland heritage. Membership is open to those persons bearing recognized sept surnames and their descendants and spouses.

Membership in the parent Clan Donnachaidh Society in Scotland includes a subscription to the Clan Donnachaidh Annual.

Membership in the Mid-Atlantic Branch of the Clan Donnachaidh Society includes a subscription to the Branch newsletter, Robertson's Rant, published quarterly and containing listings of Highland Games and Celtic Festivals throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, Game and Festival reports, historical and biographical articles, and news items of interest to Donnachaidhs everywhere. Membership also includes an open invitation to join your fellow society members at the Clan Donnachaidh Tent and Diner at numerous Games and Festivals, and at other activities including the annual Scottish Christmas Walk and Clan Donnachaidh luncheon in the Old Town section of Alexandria, Virginia, in early December.

Parent Society membership dues are \$25.00 per year (individual) and \$35.00 per year (family = two persons/same address). Mid-Atlantic Branch membership dues are \$20.00 per year (individual).



Cromwell at Dunbar, 1686, by Andrew Carrick Gow. Image from en.wikipedia.org