

# ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



## COVENANTER SCOTTISH FESTIVAL REPORT

by Norman Dunkinson

The 9th annual Covenanter Scottish Festival was held on the grounds of the Middle Octorara and Octorara Covenanter Presbyterian Churches in Quarryville, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania on Saturday, September 10th, 2022.

After a harrowing drive through thick fog in eastern York County and western Lancaster county – made doubly dangerous as this is Amish country where horses and buggies are frequently encountered on the roads – I arrived at the site of the Covenanter Scottish Festival at about 7:15am.

Despite a bit of morning confusion relative to clan tent placement due to a new layout this year, the tent was soon set, between Clan Donald and a Scottish jewelry vendor, and I was able to assist others who arrived later with setting up.

This smaller game continues to grow modestly each year and 14 clans were on the field – Bell, Bruce, Campbell, Donald, Donnachaidh, Gunn, Hay, Irwin, MacAulay, MacDougall, Montgomery, Murray, Nesbitt, and Uisdean, this year's honored clan, along with the Highland Society of Harford County (Maryland). Clan activities included participation in the annual veterans' service – this year honoring veterans of the Korean War and the Cold War era – and the parade of clans as part of opening ceremonies. While I was the lone representative of Clan Donnachaidh, I can tell that our war cry of "Fierce When Roused" was heard above all others – and most other clans had at 2 to 3 representatives participating in the parade!

**Ray** and **Ron** from Clan Bell continue to build out their tent and presentation: now with a full-size coffin that Ron made to compliment "William," their skeleton! Clan Bruce was recognized for Best Clan (Donnachaidh was recognized for the same in 2019).

The highlight of these games was clearly the athletics. Those running the athletics were involved in designing the new layout, which essentially provided 3 fields in a "U" shape around the clan area. Specific events were assigned to each field and the various brackets, including both men and women, rotated through these fields. The field for the caber toss was adjacent to our tent, and the field for the hammer toss and stone throw was nearby as well, so I had a great view

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Tom Due

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### COVENANTER SCOTTISH FESTIVAL REPORT (CONTINUED)

of these events throughout the day.

I encourage members, particularly those who live in Pennsylvania and Maryland, to check out these games. Quarryville is about 1 hour southeast of Harrisburg; 1 ½ hours east of Philadelphia, and 1 ½ hours northeast of Baltimore, Maryland.



Clan Donnachaidh at the Edinboro Scottish Games. Tristan Wyatt, 3rd from left; Sam Kistler, 2nd from right; Tom Due, far right.

## SCOTS HUMOR

Way back in 1457, King James II of Scotland had an edict passed by the Scots Parliament to ban the playing of golf to preserve the skills of archery. Scots were prohibited from “playeing golfe” on Sundays because it interfered with military training for the wars against the English. The ban on golf wasn’t lifted until 1502. Since that time, the game of golf has spread worldwide and naturally, jokes about golfers abound.

An American visitor was playing the Royal Dornoch Golf Club. From the very first tee, he succeeded in driving his ball into every bunker, pond and clump of gorse within range.

On the sixth hole, he turned to his caddy. “This is the toughest course I’ve ever played.”

“How dae ye ken?” asked old Duncan. “Ye hae no played on it yet.”

## 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:

<b>Brenton Anderson</b>	<b>Justin Dobson</b>	<b>Alexandra Duncan</b>	<b>John Duncan</b>
<b>Trudy Hughart</b>	<b>Denise Jones</b>	<b>Ernest Malcolm Jr.</b>	<b>Peter Middleton</b>
<b>Heather Raulerson</b>	<b>Jamie Roberts</b>	<b>Andrew Robertson</b>	<b>Bethany Stinson</b>
<b>Ripley Williams</b>			

## BOOK REVIEW—WHISKY GALORE!

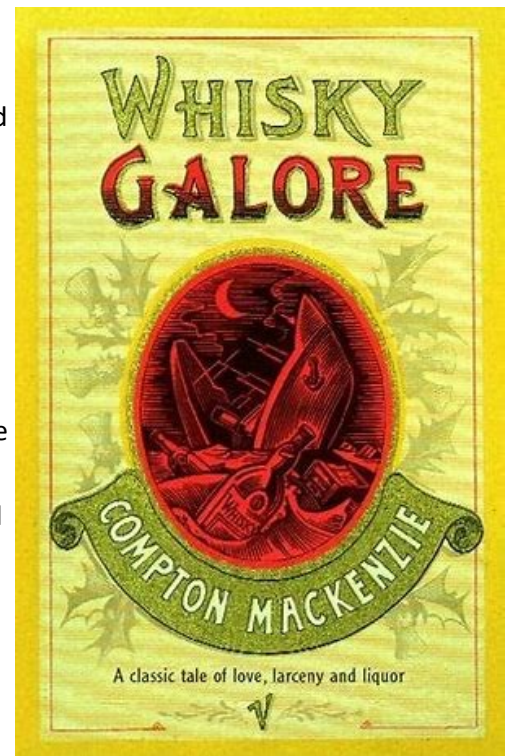
By Jim Fargo

Written and published by Sir Compton Mackenzie (1883-1972) in 1947, "Whisky Galore" is a humorous tale of islanders on the fictitious remote island in the Outer Hebrides named Today during WWII that has been cut off by wartime rationing from any Scotch whisky supplies. The islanders are elated with the fortuitous shipwreck of an English cargo ship (the SS Cabinet Minister) on the way to the U.S. with 50,000 cases of export-only malt whisky as payment for lend-lease weapons to support the war effort.

Of course, the thirsty islanders want to raid the shipwreck and offload as much of the cargo as possible before the Inland Revenue custom agents arrive to protect the cargo. But before a fleet of fishing vessels can be launched, it's Sunday morning at 12:01AM and the village men must put off the launch until Sunday ends. After church, the islanders gather to watch the wreck from the shoreline, hoping it doesn't sink. As Sunday ends at midnight, the fleet takes off for the wreck and over 200 cases are safely removed and hidden before the wreck sinks at 3AM. The British Captain Waggett assigned to lead the island's Home Guard defense from a German invasion is determined to search homes and confiscate the purloined cases. The Captain calls the mainland and Inland Revenue customs agents arrive to retrieve the liberated cases. What follows is a comedy of what lengths people will go to transport, hide and protect their unexpected treasure from the British authorities.

Postscript: To encourage you to read the book and watch the original movie, I won't tell you the ending. The story is based on the real life shipwreck of the SS Politician off the coast of the Hebridean island of Eriskay in 1941. The black and white movie 'Whisky Galore' released in 1949 provides entertaining insights into the life of islanders and their humorous way of coping with a welcome respite from the lack of whisky during WW II. Another highlight of the movie is seeing clansman James Robertson Justice portraying Dr. McLaren who provides a needed buffer between the islanders and the Captain.

A remake of the original premiered at the 2016 Edinburgh Film Festival and was in general release in 2017. The New York Times wrote that "the appeal of this limp retread is difficult to discern."





## ROBERTSON'S RANT

# GREEN HILL HIGHLAND GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo

Saturday, August 27th, began the second half of my Games Season attendance as I drove two hours down I-81 to Salem, Virginia, for the Green Hill Highland Games. My "clan van" arrived at the Green Hill Park at 7:30am to find our neighbor and clansman **Ern Malcolm** of Clan Malcolm/MacCallum already setting up for the day. **Robert Knight** and I quickly erected my 12x12 tent then we set up his tent next door for his first official convener experience representing Clan MacNaughton. We were both ready for visitors when clan piper **Ripley Williams** arrived to help out. This was the renewal of the Green Hill Games which were last held in 2019.

There were sixteen clans in attendance this year. The day was beautiful and in the mid-80s all day and we had a good turnout of local clanfolk coming into the tent in addition to a large contingent from our Carolina branch! Thanks to Ripley, **Vicki** and **Mike Stead**, **Michelle** and **Mike Roberts**, **Patrick** and daughter

**Rory Robertson** and others for providing support for our Donnachaidh Diner for all to enjoy. The day was a great success as two new members joined our branch: **Peter (Robertson) Middleton** and **Denise (Robertson) Jones**, and one new member joined the Carolina Branch!

Ripley was instrumental in getting an unscheduled clan parade organized and many thanks to Vicki for going around to the other clans and urging them to participate. This was a great opportunity to carry and display the large quantity of weaponry that our clanfolk brought to the tent. Thanks to **Lizz Koedam** for convincing her husband **Paul** to march with us. The parade was a total success, which I believe all the games visitors enjoyed.

For me, one of the closing highlights of the day was **Catherine McClain** stopping by and playing some fiddle selections for our enjoyment. She is the young lady who won our clan's sponsored fiddling trophy at the 2018 Virginia Scottish Games. Sadly there was no whisky tasting event this year, although Ern, Robert and I did enjoy a few drams of MacNaughton blended whisky which we had brought with us.

To all of our clanfolk and friends who stopped by, thank you! Your attendance made it a very enjoyable day for all of us and we plan to host a clan tent here again next year!



Clan Donnachaidh at the Green Hill Highland Games.

## SCOTLAND'S SEPTEMBER 11TH

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

While Americans recently mourned the anniversary of September 11, 2001, in the United States, this same date marked a great victory for Scotland that occurred 725 years ago in 1297.

On that date, under the leadership of William Wallace and Sir Andrew Murray, an English army sent north by King Edward I (known as the 'Hammer of the Scots') to quell another rebellion in Scotland was defeated. Herein a brief update on this victory, known as the Battle of Sterling Bridge.

In the months preceding this battle, Wallace had been declared an outlaw for his murder of the English Sheriff of Lanark William Heselrig. Wallace was faced at home with negotiations with wishy-washy Scots nobles who were not sure it was in their best interest to join with him against England and possibly be in danger of losing both their English and Scottish estates if the rebellion failed. Wallace at the same time was gathering military strength in the Forest of Selkirk from the common folk that readily joined his army to free themselves from the English occupation and restore King John Balliol to an independent Scottish throne after his forced exile in 1296 by King Edward I.

Left in charge of a defeated Scotland was Treasurer Hugh de Cressingham to raise and collect onerous taxes for King Edward's continental campaign in Flanders and John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, in command of English garrisons stationed to keep order.

At the time, Treasurer Cressingham, estimated the English army sent north to augment the resident forces at 300 horse and ten thousand men as they left Berwick for Scotland in August 1297. This army reached the castle at Stirling in the first week of September. In the meantime, Wallace and Sir Andrew Murray had united their respective forces after a meeting in Dundee where Murray had been besieging the castle..

Arriving at the bridge Warenne sent two Dominican friars to demand that the Scots surrender and Wallace is reputed to have replied "Tell your commander that we are not here to make peace but to do battle to defend ourselves and liberate our Kingdom." Warenne then made the decision to advance over the Stirling Bridge to meet the Scots army camped on the slope of Abbey Craig, one mile from the bridge.

Fortunately, the English could only cross the narrow bridge over the River Forth in ranks of two horsemen abreast and the Scots waited until the vanguard led by Cressingham had almost finished crossing the bridge and began deploying for battle before charging down the slope to attack. With the northern end of the bridge blocked by the fighting, the remaining English forces couldn't advance to their aid. The victory was complete. Cressingham and most of the vanguard were slaughtered or drowned in the river attempting to escape. The remnants of the English army fled and their baggage train was captured. Contemporary English records say the English lost 100 cavalry and 5,000 infantry killed. Scottish losses are unknown except for reporting that Murray had been mortally wounded.

Postscript: Despite this victory inaccurately depicted in the 1995 movie 'Braveheart', the war continued. Wallace would probably have preferred to stick to guerilla tactics, but being promoted to Guardian of Scotland, he was forced to another set piece battle at Falkirk on July 22, 1298. Here the Scottish cavalry treacherously deserted him after the three Scottish schiltrons had held off King Edward's cavalry. With no supporting cavalry, the Welsh archers rained arrows down on the Scots completing their defeat. The Scots did not regain complete independence and recognition

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## ROBERTSON'S RANT

# SCOTLAND'S SEPTEMBER 11TH (CONTINUED)

as a separate kingdom until the Treaty of Northampton on March 17, 1328 signed by King Robert I (the Bruce) and King Edward III.

*Reference:*

*Fisher, Andrew, "William Wallace", John Donald Publishers, Edinburgh, 2002, pp. 86-110.*

## VIRGINIA SCOTTISH GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo

This past Labor Day weekend was the second games event in a week for me as I arrived at Great Meadows on Saturday morning September 3rd for the 48th Annual Virginia Scottish Games.

Unlike past years, our House of Gordon cousins were not beside us in their usual spot so we did not have the normal combined four-tent frontage. The Gordon conveners were unable to attend this year. The good news is that we did have a Gordon presence in the tent as **Pam** and **John Farmer** came to help us plus dual member **Jerry** and **Ann Vandenberg** were hosting a vendor tent just opposite us and provided us with electricity. Our side neighbors were Clans MacCallum hosted by clan member **Ern Malcolm** and Clan MacNaughton hosted by **Robert Knight**. This was the same layout we used at the Green Hill Games the previous weekend. The entertainment tent was about 50



Clan Donnachaidh at the Virginia Scottish Games. From left: Brent Anderson, Mia Anderson, Sam Kistler, Steve Hoffman, Steve's friend Chris, Don Behe, Jim Fargo, Mary Alice Behe, unknown, and Robert Knight.

## VIRGINIA SCOTTISH GAMES REPORT (CONTINUED)

feet from our clan site and was an ideal location for both listening to the Celtic music and watching the athletic competitions.

After setting up our clan tents on a beautiful sunny morning and arranging flags and tables, we were joined by **Evan Duncan**, **Dan Fouse** and **John Robertson** to help us get ready for the 9:00am opening of the games. As the athletic events began, we were pleased to see one of our clan athletes on the field and were soon joined by **Justin Pearce**. Justin competed in all the Saturday events and by the end of the day had won the overall competition! This qualified Justin to compete in the East Coast Championships next year. On Sunday, clan athlete **Charlie Kyle** was on the field and did very well by beating his Clan Lindsay competition.



Clan Donnachaidh at the Virginia Scottish Games. From left: Chris Gordon, Jim Fargo, Evan Duncan, Sam Kistler, unknown, and Robert Knight.

After chatting with a piper walking past the clan tent in an Ancient Duncan tartan kilt, I was elated to learn that he was with the Siren City Pipe Band from the Norfolk, Virginia area. The band is not associated with any clan as yet, but that may change as they already wear an excellent tartan. **Don Behe** and I went down to listen to their judged performance and later saw them awarded the first place trophy in Grade 4.

Our Open Second Place clan fiddling trophy in memory of Ronald Duncan Gonnella was won this year by **Lydia Long**. Our adopted long time clan fiddler, **Catherine McClain** has now won the Open First Place trophy twice in a row. My thanks to Catherine for stopping by the clan tent to entertaining everyone with some outstanding fiddle tunes.

Sunday's weather was the same as Saturday. Visitor attendance was similar to Saturday but President **Sam Kistler** was able to join us and help us greet clanfolk and visitors as they arrived. Many thanks to **Steve Hoffman** and his girlfriend **Chris** (extraordinary saleswoman) for their outstanding t-shirt sales (with me serving as the model); Jerry and Ann Vandenberg; Pam and John Farmer; **Chris Gordon** (for bringing her avian friends and her dog 'Arrow'); our two adjoining clan tent mates; and all the visitors from other clans who stopped by to socialize with us over both days. Special thanks to Don and **Mary Alice Behe** for helping me to pack up both days.

Our Diner did not have the excellent Gordon Grill support from **Dave** and **Lois Todd** this year but we did have the Gordon "Boiler" with John Farmer and I boiling brats and hot dogs for lunch. My thanks to everyone for bringing victuals and drinks to support us over both days.

We look forward to next year and hope to see everyone at the 49th Virginia Scottish Games at Great Meadows on September 2-3, 2023.



**ROBERTSON'S RANT****PRINCE CHARLES NEAR RANNOCH MOOR—SEPTEMBER 1746**

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

At the Jacobite victory at Prestonpans on September 21, 1745, Alexander Robertson of Struan was 77 years of age. He was there with about 200 of his tenants. He was persuaded to return home after the battle and rode home to Rannoch in the captured carriage of General Sir John Cope. His men joined the rest of our clansmen under the command of Donald Robertson of Woodsheal, as part of the Atholl brigade commanded by Lord George Murray.

After the disaster at Culloden Moor on April 16, 1746, the fugitive Prince Charles wandered continually from place to place throughout the Western Isles to avoid the English patrols sent out by the Duke of Cumberland to capture him. British warships patrolled the coastline to prevent any attempt by him to escape on a French ship. Thanks to the loyalty of the people he came in contact with during this period, not one person betrayed him for the Government reward of 30 thousand pounds.

He was able to evade his Government pursuers and escaped from Skye to the mainland on August 21st. He remained in hiding until on August 30th, the Prince was at last able to meet Lochiel, chief of the Camerons, whom he had last seen at Culloden Moor, four and a half months previously. This gallant old chieftain had been hiding in a little shieling on a hill within the Ben Alder forest. The Prince was taken to another shieling further into the forest where they were met by Cluny MacPherson on September 2nd. The Prince was escorted to 'Cluny's Cage', the cave where Cluny was in hiding, protected by his clansmen. The 'Cage' was located on the steep western side of Ben Alder overlooking the southwestern end of Loch Ericht. Looking further south the view took in Rannoch Moor with Schiehallion rising in the distance.

After eight days in comparative comfort in 'Cluny's Cave', one of the MacPherson clansmen guarding the area brought word that two French vessels had arrived in Loch an Uamh and on September 13th, the Prince, Lochiel and their escort said farewell to Cluny and started for the coast. They arrived at Borradale on September 19th, and joined by over 100 other fugitives embarked on the two French vessels and sailed to exile in France.

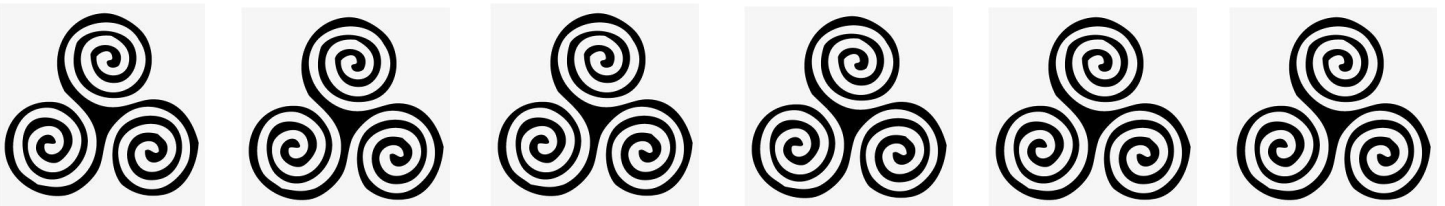
Sadly, our chief was unable to say farewell before his Prince escaped to France. Alexander was residing on the southern side of Loch Rannoch at Carie. Government militias stationed at Rannoch Barracks and throughout Atholl were searching for Jacobite fugitives. At his advanced age, it would have been unsafe for Alexander to leave his home on any suspicious journey. He died at home on April 18, 1749 and was buried in the family tomb at Struan Kirk.

*References:*

*Jesse, John Heneage, "Memoirs of the Pretenders and Their Adherents", Vol. II, London, 1845, pp. 101-110.*

*Robertson, James, "Chiefs of Clan Donnachaidh 1275-1749", Perth, 1929, p. 60.*

*Tomasson & Buist, "Battles of the '45", Macmillan Company, New York, 1962, p. 205.*







Clan Donnachaidh at the Ligonier Highland Games. From left: Patrick Due, Heather Due, Sam Kistler, and Evan Duncan.

## ALEXANDRIA SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK



Clan Donnachaidh at the Fish Market in 2008. From left: Ron Bentz, Norman Dunkinson, and Christine Dunkinson.

The 51st annual Scottish Christmas Walk will be held in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, on Saturday, December 3, 2022. Please join us to march in the parade and for our annual luncheon in an upstairs private room at the Fish Market at 105 King Street. The parade begins at 11:00am at Wolfe and South Saint Asaph streets and ends at Market Square. Enjoy marching units filled with the magnificent tartans of Scottish Clans, the stirring sound of Scottish bagpipes and drums, Scottish dancers, reenactment groups, Scottie dogs, dignitaries, classic cars, Santa Claus, and much more. Please visit the As noted at the Campagna Center website (<https://www.campagnacenter.org/event/alexandria-scottish-christmas-walk-parade/>) for more information. We hope to see you there!





Catherine McClain, fiddling under the watchful eye of Jim Fargo, at the Green Hill Highland Games.

**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).

Battle of Culloden Monument, Culloden Moor, Inverness, Scotland. Photo by Norman Dunkinson, August 2003.

