

ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



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MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY/TREASURER

by Norman Dunkinson

Welcome to 2023! I'm sure I speak for all of our officers when I say we are very much looking forward to this year's games season!

Most games have already published event dates for 2023 and the schedule for the 1st half of the games season is shown on the last page of this newsletter. This will be the 44th year for the Southern Maryland Celtic Festival at St. Leonard on April 29th and the 61st year for the Colonial Highland Gathering at Fair Hill, Maryland, on May 20th. Attend, if you can, some of the "younger" games too, such as the Carroll County Celtic Festival in Westminster, Maryland, on June 10th—attendance at these "younger" games helps ensure they stick around and continue to grow.

Please consider renewing your membership with the branch if you haven't already done so. Membership dues allow us to pay the fees required to set-up our tent at the games and supply our tent with materials (including food and drink at certain events). Some of these fees are now \$100 or more per event. For the convenience of our members, we implemented online membership dues payment capability at www.robertson.org in October 2020.

Barring any unforeseen circumstances, my family and I will be travelling to Scotland in mid-June. Our itinerary includes a few days in Clan Donnachaidh territory when we'll be based out of Pitlochry. We'll be sure to take plenty of photos to share in future editions of this newsletter.

Branch Officers

President:

Sam Kistler

Vice President:

Tom Due

Secretary/Treasurer:

Norman Dunkinson



From <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/mine-could-spoil-the-queens-view-s2tm03520>.

Inside this issue:

Battle of Old Byland— 1322	2
Ceud Mile Failte	3
Scots Humor	3
Saint Columba (521-597)	3
Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk	5
Loch Tummel Massacres	6
Excerpts from a Diary— First Trip to Scotland (Part I)	7

ROBERTSON'S RANT

BATTLE OF OLD BYLAND—1322

by James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Two years after the Declaration of Arbroath, a little remembered battle during the Scottish War of Independence occurred in North Yorkshire, England on October 14, 1322. King Edward II had failed in a 1319 attempt to retake Berwick-on-Tweed after its capture by Robert the Bruce in 1318. Seeking a victory to quell his rebellious barons, King Edward II took to the field in 1322 in what turned out to be his last invasion of Scotland. His goal was to retake Berwick, ravage the Lothians and reach Edinburgh. As usual, the scorched-earth policy of Scots left neither food for man nor beast to support his invading English army. Forced to retreat back into Yorkshire to gather provisions for his starving army, he set up camp near Byland Abbey in North Yorkshire.

King Robert the Bruce led a hastily assembled Scottish army of around 20 thousand into Yorkshire and surprised the hungry and sick English army of up to 65,000 at Byland Moor forcing Edward to take flight without his personal baggage and flee along with his routed army. English losses were estimated at eight thousand versus the loss of nine hundred Scots. This Scottish army consisted of the manpower of Lothian, the Isles and Argyll. According to the English writer of the chronicle 'Scalacronica' (Sir Thomas Grey of Heaton), "The Scots were so fierce, and their chiefs so daring, and the English so badly cowed, that it was no otherwise between them than as a hare before greyhounds."

With the boldness and speed of the defeat of the English army along with the burning and destruction of property, capture of livestock and theft of abbey wealth between September 30 and November 2, 1322, the incursion became known as the 'Great Raid of 1322'.

A thirteen year truce was concluded in May 1323 which only lasted until 1332 when an English army led by Edward Balliol, son and heir of King John Balliol, landed in Fife in an attempt to regain his father's lost throne from Robert the Bruce's young son King David II. Balliol was supported by the 'disinherited knights' (among whom was the former Earl of Atholl) who had lost their lands and titles after Bannockburn. This invasion resulted in Scottish defeats at the battles of Dupplin Moor and Halidon Hill.

Eventually Edward Balliol lost English support due to the beginning of the Hundred Years' War with France and in 1341 King David II was able to return to Scotland and reclaim his throne. There is no record that Duncan (our first chief), his four sons or any of our clan were involved in either battle. Any earldom of Atholl involvement would have been limited to James Stewart, nephew of the new earl of Atholl and his immediate followers.

References:

Rait, Robert S., "The Making of Scotland", London, 1929, pp. 93-94.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.



Byland Abbey from <https://en.advisor.travel/poi/Byland-Abbey-16165>.

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:

Ron Bentz

Steven L. Duncan

Lizz Koedam

Karen S. Layne

Carol A. Lucian

Harry L. Robertson

Luke Sayre

Jerry Vandenberg

SCOTS HUMOR

Upon entering a store on Main Street Pitlochry, an Englishman tourist noticed a big "BEWARE OF DOG" sign posted on the door. He continued very cautiously until he noticed an old Scottie asleep on the floor near the cash register.

"Is that the dog we're supposed to be aware of?" he asked the young lady behind the counter.

"Aye, that's him," she replied.

"He doesn't look dangerous. Why do you need that sign?"

"Because," she explained, "before I put it up, folks kept tripping over him."

SAINT COLUMBA (521-597)

by James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Saint Columba is the patron saint of the city of Derry, where in 540 he founded a monastic settlement.

Prince Colum, son of Fedlimidh MacFergus, King of the Northern Ui Neill, was the abbot of Derry in 559. That year, he had copied without permission the religious books belonging to another abbot. That abbot, Finnian, wanted to keep the copies that Colum had made as he had only given permission for Colum to read and study, not copy them. In 560 at Tara, the High King (Ard-Ri) heard the case and ruled against Colum stating that "To every cow belongs her calf, therefore to every book belongs its copy."

The following year, the southern warriors of Meath were called to arms to support the High King's ruling against Colum. On the plains of Culdrevne, near Sligo Bay, the combined northern army of Ulstermen and Connaught were arrayed against them and defeated the southerners. Known as the 'Battle of the Book', the battle was claimed to have caused around three thousand casualties. As the penalty for causing the battle, the High King banished Colum to exile with his Ulster kinsmen of Dal Riata in Alba (Scotland). The banishment stipulated that he was to win as many souls to Christianity as had been lost in the battle.

Abbot Colum Cille (or "dove of the Church") and twelve monks appointed to accompany him in exile sailed from Derry to Dunadd, the capital of Dal Riata. The exiled abbot was offered an island by King Conall at Dunadd, a fortress sited above the river Add which flowed into the Sound of Jura. On May 12, 563, their boats grounded on the beach of an isolated island named Hy (Iona) across the narrow straits from the Isle of Mull and there they established their monastic settlement. Known as an old graveyard island of the Picts it was also home to the sun-circles of the druids. After building individual cells to live in and erecting a chapel, the monks began a period of missionary activity making converts and founding churches along the southwest coast and in the Hebrides.

Adamnan was ministering in Glenlyon for years before he became the abbot of Iona Abbey from 679-704. Adamnan

ROBERTSON'S RANT

SAINT COLUMBA (CONTINUED)

was the author of the 'Life of Columba' which documented the biography of Columba. He reported that in 565, Columba led a group of five followers northward along the shores of Loch Ness to Inverness, the capital of the Northern Picts on a diplomatic mission for Dal Riata. Saint Adamnan related in that biography that at some point while visiting the King of the Northern Picts at Inverness, Columba picked up a stone from the River Ness that could float in water and when the King drank from water from which the stone was immersed, he was instantly cured. For that he gained pagan King Bridei's (Brude mac Maelchon) permission to preach Christianity to his people.

One of the many stories of miracles which Columba performed during his work to convert the Picts, was his encounter in 565 with an unidentified "water beast" which he banished to the depths of the river Ness after it had killed a Pict and then tried to attack one of Columba's disciples.



Dunkeld Cathedral. Photo by Norman Dunkinson. August 2003.

In 570, Saint Columba is said to have spent six months in Dunkeld and founded the original monastery which is now Dunkeld Cathedral in what then was the capital of the old kingdom of the Caledonii now known as Atholl. Atholl was one of the four separate provinces or kingdoms of the Southern Picts. Angus, Fortrenn and Fife were the other kingdoms.

Saint Columba died and was buried at Iona on Sunday, June 9, 597.

While Adamnan was the abbot of Iona, he sent missionaries into the territories of the southern Picts. One of these monks, Saint Fillian, was the founder of a settlement which is now the clan kirk at Struan. At Dull in Strathtay, a monastic settlement was established with a college to train missionaries to spread the Gospel. Duncan Fraser's book (page 34) states that Saint Adamnan was buried at Dull. Centuries later, Duncan; our first chief, was also buried there by his eldest son Robert.

Clan Donnachaidh are heirs of the Kindred of Saint Columba as shown by an early seal of Saint Columba enthroned on a couple of wolves while our chief's coat of arms including supporters of a serpent and dove (Columba means dove) with the chief's shield contains three wolf heads.

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Several other clans claim descent from his original followers. Among them is the Clan Malcolm/McCallum who claims descent from one of his original disciples. The Clan Mackinnon claim to be spiritual descendants of Saint Columba as they were the abbots of the monastery on Iona for centuries and belong to the kindred as their chief's quartered crest displays the hand of Saint Columba holding a Cross.

References:

Desjarlais, John, "The Throne of Tara", Good News Publishers, 1990, pp.

Dillon, Myles & Chadwick, Nora, "The Celtic Realms", Castle Books, 2006, pp.

Fraser, Duncan, "Highland Perthshire", Montrose Standard Press, 1969, pp. 2, 34, 79.

Robertson, James Irvine, "The Robertsons, Clan Donnachaidh in Atholl", 2005, pp. 21-22, 24.

ALEXANDRIA SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK REPORT

By Jim Fargo

Our last Branch event of 2022 was the Scottish Christmas Walk in Olde Town Alexandria, Virginia. This parade is always held on the first Saturday of December (December 3rd) and marks the start of the Christmas shopping season in Alexandria. **Andrew Fargo, Robert Knight** and I arrived at 8 AM and joined President **Sam Kistler** for breakfast. Arriving at the gathering site on South Pitt Street around 10 AM, we were met by **James and Jamie Roberts** with their Austin Healey. Having a car as part our parade unit was a welcomed first!! Other clanfolk attending were: **Mary Alice Behe; Justin, Cat and Nora Dobson; Steve Hoffman and family; Ern Malcolm; Pierce, Devon and Henry Prior; Howard Robertson** and others mentioned below.



Clan Donnachaidh at the Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk. Left to Right: Emily Boehm; Andrew Fargo; James Roberts; Todd Boehm; Jim Fargo; Steve Hoffman; Justin, Cat and Nora Dobson; Sam Kistler; Henry Prior; Jamie Roberts; Devon Prior and Sara Boehm.

We stepped off about 11:40 after an “hour” of socializing in a steady drizzle and various flask refreshments at our assigned spot (D-11) in the staging area. As the rain stopped, we were led by President **Sam Kistler** as our wolf totem was still in the van due to the rainy weather. Following Sam, our clan banner was carried by **Sara, Emily and Todd Boehm**. They were followed by **Jim Fargo, Don Behe and Andrew Fargo** carrying our clan flags. As we progressed along the parade route we added **Caroline (Robertson) DeBerry** who will be joining our branch. We practiced the clan war cry as we continued on the parade route so that as we passed the reviewing stand we were able to give a hearty “Fierce When Roused” to the honored guests. We were fortunate that it turned into a beautiful sunny day in the high 50s with no breeze for the actual parade.

Upon the conclusion of the parade at Market Square, most of our 20 marchers headed for our traditional Branch luncheon at the Fish Market (105 King Street). We were joined by clans Gordon, MacCallum, MacNaughton, Wallace and the Scottish American Military Society (SAMS). We had a delightful lunch and social gathering in our private room. Afterwards, many of us wandered off to go shopping for gifts before heading home.

ROBERTSON'S RANT

ALEXANDRIA SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK (CONTINUED)

As always, it was a great day for a parade and it concluded our 2022 event season. My only disappointment was that we didn't hear a single bagpiper or band the entire day. Please consider making plans to join us and the festivities in Alexandria on December 2, 2023!

LOCH TUMMEL MASSACRES

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

This During the time of the MacGregor persecution (1610-1613) both the Argyll and Glenorchy Campbells were authorized to hunt MacGregors by the Privy Council. Archibald, Earl of Argyll had convinced the Privy Council that the MacGregors needed to be punished for the damages they had caused in the 'Slaughter of Glenfruin' against the Clan Colquhoun along the banks of Loch Lomond. The Privy Council allowed pardons for anyone who brought the head of a MacGregor to them. Captured MacGregors brought to Edinburgh were hung. Anyone who bore the name of MacGregor could be hunted down like vermin, whether guilty of breaking the law or innocent. Captured MacGregor women were branded on the face with a hot iron key so that people would know that they were MacGregors.

The MacGregors of Rannoch went into hiding to evade roaming groups of Campbell warriors. Anyone caught har-



boring MacGregors were subject to fines. A brother of the Campbell Laird of Lawers trapped the leader of the Rannoch MacGregors in an ambush and cut off his head. Campbell sought the reward for this killing by claiming the nineteen year tack (lease) of the lands of Stronefernan, which were part of the barony of our 10th chief, Robert Robertson of Struan. Struan refused to have this Campbell as a tenant and the Privy Council, knowing that our chief would normally have to reimburse the widow for

Dunalastair Water. From <https://www.flickr.com/photos/vultan2000/27811038437>.

breaking the lease, allowed for the ejection of the MacGregor widow and children without compensation and the tack reverted back to Struan after paying fines.

At the west end of Loch Tummel, in what is now the Dunalastair Water, is a cave on top of a precipitous rocky out-

LOCH TUMMEL MASSACRES (CONTINUED)

crop on a steep hillside overlooking the Tummel River, about three miles east of Kinloch Rannoch. The only access to this cave is a path so narrow that only one person could enter at a time. Now known as MacGregors' Cave, the Campbells found this lair and shot them dead as they tried to escape.

At this time, our chief Robert Robertson of Struan lived at Invervack near Blair Castle and our Clan Museum at Bruar. A century later, Alexander (13th chief) built his 'Hermitage' which was burned by the English in 1746. The current Dunalastair ruin built on this site in 1858 can be seen across the River Tummel from the Cave.

A mile north-west of the Falls of Tummel, near Bonskeid House at the east end of Loch Tummel is another cave where MacGregors took shelter with a similar result.

By 1613, the persecutions waned as the Earl of Argyll had acquired vast amounts of money which had been collected in fines from those who had harbored MacGregors.

References:

Fraser, Duncan, "Highland Perthshire", Montrose: Standard Press, 1969, pp. 72-75.

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

EXCERPTS FROM A DAIRY—FIRST TRIP TO SCOTLAND (PART I)

By Norman Dunkinson

I kept a diary during my first trip to Scotland in 2001 and thought it might be of interest to reproduce portions of it here. Boswell I'm not, but here goes!

Day 1 (Sunday, 26 May 2001)—Glasgow

We arrived at Glasgow Airport at 11:00am yesterday. After customs, we proceeded to the rental car counter and were pleased to find that we were allotted a four door Vauxhall Omega, automatic transmission, with only 11 miles! The car is dark green. Driving on the left on the M8 was easy, but I've not yet mastered the roundabouts or right turns. From the M8, we exited at junction 15 onto Castle Street. We found Ingram Street, where the hotel directions instructed us to turn right, but I didn't know how to do this.

We proceeded south on Castle, now High Street, past the Tollbooth Steeple. With a random left turn we successfully navigated our way to the Merchant Lodge Hotel, located at Wilson and Virginia Streets. There were, however, no obvious parking facilities in the immediate vicinity. Chris went into the hotel to inquire while I waited with the car. We were directed to a parking garage on Albion Street. Parking the car, we off-loaded the minimum number of bags needed and walked back to the hotel via the Argyll Arcade (5 blocks).

After checking in to room 209 and dropping the luggage, we were off on our walking tour of the city. We got a cappuccino at a small market outside the Museum of Modern Art and looked at the traffic cones perched precipitously on the heads of the mounted figures on the statue out front. Turning right we found George Square—though not in the condition expected. The square was partially enclosed by a wire fence to accommodate an "Experience the NFL" event, complete with giant, inflatable football figures. We still managed a few photo opportunities of the Cenotaph, the City Chambers, and the Sir Walter Scott Memorial. Proceeding northeast, we wound our way up to

ROBERTSON'S RANT

EXCERPTS FROM A DIARY (CONTINUED)



Museum of Modern Art, Glasgow. From <https://outaboutscotland.com/a-guide-to-the-glasgow-gallery-of-modern-art/>.

towering above, we observed the Scott, Robertson, and other stones with clan surnames. The outline of mountains was due north of our observation point. Quite warm after toiling in the sun, we proceeded south and down the slope back to the Merchant City.

We entered the City Merchant Restaurant and were seated alone beneath a series of surreal renditions of scenes from Burns' Tam-O-Shanter. If I recall correctly, the painter was Mackintosh, though I may be wrong. The food was simple but very good—Chris had langoustines preceded by a celery and parsley soup, and I had grilled sole and the delicious Loch Etive mussels. Burnt-out and jet-lagged, we went back to the hotel, passing numerous groups of loud, partying kids, apparently celebrating a home team football victory. The green and white striped football jerseys were everywhere. Although the excitement in the streets was tempting, we fell asleep at 6:00pm.

Saint Mungo's and the Necropolis. Saint Mungo's is a beautiful gothic church, one of the few originals, we understand, that survived the Reformation. While touring the interior, we were entertained by an organ recital. Chris identified a Gemmill on a plaque, and we entered the bowels of the church and saw Saint Mungo's tomb—looking more like an altar and not a tomb. We deduced that Saint Mungo was under the floor.

We walked outside on the massive grave-slabs that littered the churchyard and took the bridge to the Necropolis. Vacating the path, we climbed over a boundary wall while some goth/punk youngsters struggled with the same a few yards down. With John Knox



St. Mungo's Cathedral, Glasgow. From <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/cathdrale-saintmungo-de-glasgow--816488607417127868/>.

EXCERPTS FROM A DIARY (CONTINUED)

Day 2 (Monday, 27 May 2001)—Stirling

On Sunday, 27 May, we had breakfast around 8:15am at the Merchant Lodge. The help would place a “reserved” sign at each table as people sat down at them and the tourists (like us) would ask if they had taken someone else’s seat. We arrived at the parking garage, after checking out, around 9:00am, to find that the parking garage did not open until 10:30am. We parked our bags in the Merchant’s Square (a shopping center of sorts) and I completed yesterday’s journal entry.

After picking up the car we were off for Stirling. At Stirling, we grabbed a bite at the Golden Lion Hotel (a meat pie and mash and sausage) and headed up the “back walk” to Stirling Castle. Entering the castle, we caught up with a tour already in progress.

Easily the most picturesque part of the castle, we spent most of our time in the garden outside of the Prince’s Tower. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlander’s Regimental Museum was also quite interesting, especially the collection of ram’s horn snuff mulls (including an entire ram’s head!).

After the tour of the castle we purchased ice cream cones from the ice cream man (who shoe’d away the children in front of me with a “get on with you now, let the man up!”). This guy was the archetypal fat, red-faced and jolly ice cream man.

We proceeded to the cemetery adjacent to the Church of the Holy Rood, immediately below the castle, and found a Dunkinson (oops, Duncanson) in the cemetery and stood on the Ladies Rock.

Prior to lunch and the castle tour, we visited the Abbey Craig and Wallace Monument. The view of the Ochil Hills and surrounding area is magnificent from the summit of the tower.

After the cemetery, we proceeded back along the back walk to the car, and toward Callander on the A84. Checking in at East Mains House Bed and Breakfast, we explored the town’s main street and settled on the Dalgair House Hotel for dinner. I found the haggis that the Golden Lion was out of earlier, and I must say that the deep-fried version with mustard sauce was most excellent. Chris had a Strongbow cider, her favorite drink so far. We were seated beside a couple from Chicago who appeared to be having no fun at all. Very stiff and stuffy. Both of us had the carvery roast beef. We then went to the Riverview Inn Bar, where we hung out with the early 20’s crowd and had a few pints before retiring.



The Wallace Monument, Stirling. From https://electricScotland.com/history/wallace_monument.htm.



From <https://www.pinterest.com.mx/pin/scotland--801711171144595897/>.

**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).

CELTIC EVENTS & GAMES—2023

<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
Pittsburgh Tartan Day Celebration	Bethel Park, PA	Apr 15th
Dills Celtic Festival	Dillsburg, PA	Apr 22nd
Southern Maryland Celtic Festival	St. Leonard, MD	Apr 29th
Colonial Highland Gathering	Fair Hill, MD	May 20th
Garrett County Celtic Festival	Friendsville, MD	Jun 3rd
Carroll County Celtic Festival	Westminster, MD	Jun 10th
Celtic Fling & Highland Games	Manheim, PA	Jun 24th-25th

