

# ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



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## TEAMWORK

by Jim Fargo

Trying not to hit a deer, an English visitor runs off the road on his way to Loch Rannoch. He walks over to the nearest farmhouse and asks the Scotsman if he could have assistance in getting his car out of the ditch.

The Scotsman is obliging and takes the Englishman over to the barn and starts talking to the one old blind mule in there. The Scotsman starts calling out various names, "Angus, Hamish, Jock and Alastair" to the old mule as he hitches a harness to old Jock. The visitor is confused and as they leave the barn and go toward the car, he asks the Scotsman why he called out all those names.

After hitching old Jock to the car, he starts calling out those names again as old Jock manages to pull the car out of the ditch. The farmer tells the visitor that old Jock could never pull the heavy car out by himself, but believing that there are three other mules helping him pull encourages blind Jock to pull harder.

The moral of this story is that teamwork helps to make the clan stronger. We need volunteers to help operate the clan tent and become future conveners at the various festivals we attend.

## 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:

**Lynn Bernard**

**Alexandra Duncan**

**John J. Duncan**

**Heather L. Raulerson**

**Marty A. Robertson**

**Mary D. Breeden**

**Amanda L. Duncan**

**Ralph D. Fouse**

**John C. Robertson**

**Tamera R. Talbott**



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**Sam Kistler**

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**Tom Due**

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**Norman Dunkinson**

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# VIRGINIA SCOTTISH GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo

The beginning of the second half of my Games Season saw our clan tents go up at Great Meadows this past Labor Day weekend. **Robert Knight** and I were pleased to arrive on Saturday morning, September 2nd, for the 49th annual Virginia Scottish Games. After putting up our two tents and arranging flags and tables, Robert and I were joined by **Evan Duncan** and **John Robertson** to help us get ready for the 9:00am opening of the games.

As in past years, we were situated right next to our House of Gordon cousins at the usual end of our clan row with a combined four-tent frontage. The entertainment tent was about 50 feet from the clan site and was an ideal place for both listening to the celtic music and watching the athletic competitions.



Robert Knight, Tony LaCava, Sam Kistler, Jim Fargo, Charles Roberts, Mary Alice Behe, and Don Behe at the Virginia Scottish Games on September 2, 2023.

As the athletic events began on Saturday, we noticed none of our clan tartans were on the field. **Justin Pearce** and his parents came on Sunday to compete in Sunday's East Coast Championship athletic competition and although Justin didn't win we were proud of his efforts against outstanding competition! On Sunday, our clan sponsored Open Second Place Fiddling Trophy (in memory of Ronald Duncan Gonnella) was won by **Becca Longhenry**. Becca came to the tent along with **Christine McLain** who won the Open First Place trophy. Christine entertained us with a nice selection of fiddle tunes as she has done for many years.

## VIRGINIA SCOTTISH GAMES REPORT (CONTINUED)

Sunday's weather was just the same as Saturday, just a lot hotter (mid 90s). There was a clan parade on Saturday with twelve + of us marching, but Sunday, the parade was cancelled due to the excessive heat. The weather was described by the Clan Lindsay ladies as "toasty". Sunday's attendance was way down from Saturday although our regular clanfolk and visitors did return. Special thanks to **Don** and **Mary Alice Behe**, **Evan Duncan**, **Dan Fouse**, **Steve Hoffman**, **John Robertson** and **Jerry Vandenberg** and all the 'regulars' from other clans who stopped by to visit with us over both days.

As usual we combined our Donnachaidh Diner with the Gordon Grill and everyone in both clans and our guests were well fed. My thanks to everyone for bringing victuals and drinks to support our Diner contribution again this year and to **Dave** and **Lois Todd** for hosting the Gordon Grill and cooking our Sunday breakfast and lunches both days.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the 50th Virginia Scottish Games at Great Meadows on August 31 - September

## MACGLASHAN SEPT

by James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

This surname is derived from the Gaelic which meant 'son of the grey lad.' Some associated spellings are Galashan, Glassin, MacGlass, MacGlossen and MacGolash.

The MacGlashan sept of Clan Donnachaidh are said to be "descended from the old Stewart family of Ballechin". The Adam's reference goes on to say that due to "some family disagreement, these Stewarts renounced their family name, and adopted in place of it that of MacGlashan, by which name they have ever since been known." When the old Stewart line of the Earls of Atholl died out in 1625, the earldom reverted to the Crown. The Crown bestowed the earldom in 1629 to the current Murray ducal line. At that time "the MacGlashans appear to have become followers of the Clan Donnachie". The reference states that "Some of them who settled in the south Anglicised their names as Gray."

In 1600, Sir James Stewart of Ballechin gave a charter of the lands and mill of Pitlochry to his cousin, John Butter of Killyvoulin. The estate of Ballechin is located in the Logierait parish of Perthshire on the north side of the River Tay, approximately 4 miles southeast of Pitlochry. The village of Logierait is situated at the confluence of the rivers Tay and Tummel. Logierait was the seat of the regality court of the Earls of Atholl. Following the River Tay west toward Loch Tay were the Robertsons of Fearnan, Lawers and other estates.

An extract from the Session Minutes records states that on April 11, 1744, Susan McGlashan, wife of Donald Robertson in Easter Kindrochit breached the Sabbath by leading a horse with a load of baggage on its back from the boat of Aperuanie to their house. She was summoned to answer for said breach.

The inn at Blair Atholl in 1746 was called the MacGlashan Inn after the proprietor. The name MacGlashan is also a sept of Clan Mackintosh, part of the Clan Chattan confederation. That clan area is located in the north, southeast of Inverness near Culloden.

References: Adam, Frank, "The Clans, Septs and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands," W. & A.K. Johnston Limited, Edinburgh, 1908, p. 180; Kerr, John, "Church and Social History of Atholl," Perth, 1998, p. 32; McNie, Alan, "Clan Robertson," Cascade Publishing Co., Jedburgh, 1989, p. 29; Mitchell, Hugh, "Pitlochry District," Pitlochry, 1923, p. 142; Robertson, James A., "Gaelic Topography of Scotland," Edinburgh, 1869, pp. 447; Smith, Philip D., "Tartan for Me."

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# COVENANTER SCOTTISH FESTIVAL REPORT

By Norman Dunkinson

The 10th annual Covenanter Scottish Festival & Highland Games was held on Saturday, September 9, 2023, at the site of the Octorara Covenanter Presbyterian Church in Quarryville, Pennsylvania.

Arriving early, I assisted our neighbors (clans Scott, Campbell, MacAlister, and Irwin) with unload and tent set-up, but still had our tent up and ready to go long before the opening of the games at 9:00am. While the morning was a bit soggy, due to rain the night before, the day quickly heated up and many of us were wishing for rain to cool things off.

President **Sam Kistler** and I participated in the morning march of the clans, culminating with the veterans' memorial ceremony. We marched again for the opening ceremonies around noon, though there were a few less clansfolk on the field due to the heat and sun! My wife **Christine Dunkinson** arrived around 1:30pm and stayed until close.

We experienced the most visitors prior during the first half of the day, greeting a number of prospective new members, with attendance tailing off on the back-half, likely due to the heat and humidity.

This game is big on athletics, with the highland games taking up a full half of the entire field and with many different men's and women's classes competing: A, B, C, Lightweight, Junior, and Master classes by age bracket. The Philadelphia & District Pipe Band made regular rounds, and the highland dance competition and border collie demonstrations drew spectators throughout the day.

23 clans and organizations were in attendance, setting a record for this game, though we'd like to see more merchandise and food vendors attend. While there appears to be room for some more of these, this game has grown to about the limit that the site can contain. As in the morning, Sam, Chris, and I assisted our neighbors with tear-down as the event concluded.

Aside from the Celtic Classic in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in late September, where we typically don't set up a tent, this is the only full Scottish Festival & Highland Game in the eastern portion of the state, conveniently located for those in south-central and south-eastern Pennsylvania. So, if you haven't attended this one, please consider placing it on your agenda for 2024!



Sam Kistler and Norman Dunkinson at the Covenanter Scottish Festival on September 9, 2023.

## SCOTS HUMOR

One Sunday morning after church, the minister confronted his tipsy church member. “Angus, whisky is your worst enemy.”

Angus replied, “But didn’t ye tell us last Sunday to love our enemies?”

“Aye,” said the minister, “but I no said anything about swallowing them.”

## ORIGINS OF GOLF

By Jim Fargo

There will always be a debate over where golf was invented. One theory is that Holland originated a game called ‘spel metten kilve’ which was later shortened to ‘het kolve’ and the ‘kolf’. It was played by hitting a ball with a club toward a post, and was most popular on frozen ponds during winter. The Dutch historian van Hengel, believed that Dutch seamen and traders brought their clubs with them to Edinburgh’s port of Leith in the 14th century along with their flourishing commercial links with Scotland. Support for this theory is based on the trade in golf balls exported from Holland to Scotland in the 16th century. Similarities ended as Scottish golfers were hitting their balls into holes while in Holland they were still aiming at posts in the late 1400s.

The game of golf was so popular in Scotland that in the Fourteenth Parliament (March 1457) of King James II, it was banned by decree: “And that the fute-bal and golfe be utterly cryed downe, and not to be used.” Again in 1491, King James IV declared that “It is statute and ordained that in na place of the Realme there be usyt Fote-baw, Golfe, or other sik unprofitable sportis contrary to the good of the Realme and defense thereof.” The hope was that men would abandon the sports for archery practice which was necessary to defend Scotland from invasion by England.



From [https://www.usakilts.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/Golf/Elizabethan\\_golf.jpg](https://www.usakilts.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/Golf/Elizabethan_golf.jpg).

However, in 1502, King

James IV was playing golf as there is a record that the Lord High Treasurer had purchased clubs for the King. Golf spread rapidly throughout Scotland and then into England when King James VI became King James I of England in 1603. The length of each hole and the number of holes on early golf courses varied considerably until the standard was set at 18 holes around 1764. Emigration then spread golf as we know it around the world.

*Reference:*

Atha, Antony, “*The World of Golf*”, Anness Publishing Limited, London, 1997, pp. 10-12.

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Heather Due, Sam Kistler, Tom Due, Laura Wyatt, Evan Duncan, Patrick Due and guests at the Ligonier Highland Festival on September 16, 2023.



Scenes from the Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk, 2008. Norman Dunkinson Christine Dunkinson, and Karli Ginther, at right.

## RADFORD HIGHLANDERS FESTIVAL REPORT

By Jim Fargo

On Saturday October 14th, the clan van arrived at Moffet Field on the Radford University Campus for the annual Radford Highlanders Festival. **Robert Knight** and I quickly set up our tents between clans Bell and Ross. There were eight other clans present. While it rained on the way down to Radford and on the way back home, we enjoyed a partially cloudy day with no rain during the festival.

Robert and I had a great time assisting the many visitors that stopped by to research their surnames and determine which clan(s) they would be eligible to join. The clan parade began around noon with the clans mixed between the various pipe bands as we paraded onto the athletic field for the opening ceremonies. **Kimberly, Lizz** and **Marty** joined **John Lentz, Earn Malcolm** and yours truly in the parade. Throughout the day we listened to celtic music performed by Albannach and Syr. Near the end of the day, "**Didgeri-Drew Reid**" from Albannach stopped by the clan tent to sign in. Drew plays the didgeridoo in the band.

We had many clanfolk visiting during the day including: **William and Patric Dobie, John and Karen Duncan, Lizz and Paul Kordani, John Lentz, Ern Malcolm, Kimberly Payne, Soren Roberts, Marty Robertson**, and our clan piper **Ripley Williams** from the Virginia Highlands Pipes and Drums. **John Duncan** ordered a kilt from one of the vendors.

During the afternoon, **Catherine McClain**, our fiddler champion, stopped by the tent to play a few fiddle tunes for us and brought her fiancé Monti Campbell to the tent so we could meet him. We soon had an impromptu banjo concert going on as up to three other banjo players joined him.

Throughout the day, we watched our clansman **Justin Pearce** competing in the highland athletics. There was a new event added by the athletic organizers. Justin came in second in the "empty beer keg for height" competition with a height of 22 feet, with the winner clearing 23 feet.

Highly recommend this festival for the variety of events and activities ranging from seeing highland cattle, sheep herding, children activities and caricature artist, a wide mix of vendors and eateries, and an opportunity to watch the partial Eclipse that afternoon in the University's Planetarium. I like to encourage more of our clanfolk to come and join us for this one day festival next year on October 12, 2024.

## ALEXANDRIA SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK—2023

By Norman Dunkinson

Please join us for the Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk parade on Saturday, December 2, 2023, in Old Towne Alexandria, Virginia. The parade starts at 11:00am and those intending to march with us in the parade should plan to join us by 10:30am (our assembly point will be communicated to all members via email prior to the walk). Upon conclusion of the walk, we'll meet, as usual, at the Fish Market restaurant at 105 King Street for our annual clan luncheon. The Scottish Christmas Walk is one of our premier events of the year, and a great time to experience Old Towne Alexandria!

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### RICHMOND HIGHLAND GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo

This year's Richmond Highland Games & Celtic Festival was held for the first time at the Dorey Park & Recreation Center on November 4 in Henrico, VA. We were situated beside House of Gordon so we had our regular tent setup for the weekend and on the other side was our friends from Clan Douglas. As the tents are provided by the games organization, President **Sam Kistler**, **Robert Knight** and I only needed to set up our displays to be ready for visitors.

Our combined Donnachaidh Diner/Gordon Grill team (headed by master chef **Dave Todd**) was again the place to be in the morning so everyone could warm their hands over the grill. My thanks to everyone for bringing various snacks and beverages to help stock our Diner/Grill as we feasted on Dave's bacon and eggs for breakfast and delicious BBQ and Brunswick stew for lunch.

Saturday's weather began as a very cold, frosty, sunny day with frost over everything. Fortunately it did warm up. The massed bands gave a wonderful performance at noon on the athletic field. The Diner/Grill began serving between the "banner" parade at noon and before the main clan parade with everyone at 2 PM. As the clans marched onto the athletic field, our Donnachaidh contingent of sixteen led by **Tyler Davis** roared "Fierce" with the rest of us roaring "When Roused".

Saturday afternoon, we learned that our clan athlete, **Justin Pearce**, won overall second place in the master's competitions. Well done Justin!!!

Due to family commitments, I was unable to return on Sunday, so we turned the tent over to House of Gordon for Sunday expansion.

We had a steady stream of long time members plus potential clanfolk and other visitors coming by the tent. We welcomed one new member, **Lynn (Robertson) Bernard**, who joined both the Branch and Parent Society in Scotland.

This is the last festival of our Mid-Atlantic games season and is always one of the best. Definitely recommend that you add this festival to your calendar in November 2024!



Jim Fargo, Robert Knight, and Sam Kistler at the Richmond Highland Games on November 4, 2003.



## DALE ROBERTSON (1923-2013)

by Jim Fargo

Dayle Lymoine Robertson was born in Harrah, Oklahoma on July 14, 1923. He was the son of Melvin and Vernel Robertson and younger brother to Chester Howard Robertson.

Dale attended the Claremore Military Academy in Oklahoma where he fought as a professional boxer.

Joining the U.S. Army in 1943, Robertson served with Patton's Third Army as a combat engineer in North Africa and Europe. He was twice wounded in action and won a bronze and silver star before having his knee shattered by German mortar fire. He began acting in 1948 while still stationed on active duty in California.

He began his credited film career in two Randolph Scott westerns "Fighting Man of the Plains" (1949) and "Cariboo Trail" (1950). These films led to a seven year contract with 20th Century Fox to appear in a variety of movies. He went over to United Artists in 1954 for a series of western films until landing the starring role in a TV western entitled "Tales of Wells Fargo" which was produced from 1957 until 1962 and is still shown on the western TV channels. He portrayed Wells Fargo investigator, Jim Hardie. The horse that he rode throughout the series was his own horse, "Jubilee".

Later, he played the character Ben Calhoun (a gambler turned railroad baron) in the TV series "Iron Horse" in 47 episodes from September 1966 to January 1968. From 1969 to 1970 he was the fourth and final host (26 episodes) of the anthology series "Death Valley Days" which had also been hosted by Ronald Reagan (1964-1966). He appeared in over 60 movies.

Dale was married four times. The first marriage to Frederica Wilson (1951-1956) ended in divorce with one daughter Rochelle, born in 1952. The second marriage to Mary Murphy (1956-1957) and third to Lula Mae Harding (1959-1977) both ended in divorce. Dale and Lula Mae adopted a daughter, Rebel Lee, born in 1958. Dale Robertson married Susan Dee Robbins in 1980. They lived on his horse farm in Yukon, Oklahoma where he raised horses, at one time owning 235 horses. They later moved back to San Diego.

In 1960 Dale Robertson received a star on the "Hollywood Walk of Fame" located at Hollywood Boulevard and Wilcox Avenue. He was the recipient of the Golden Boot Award in 1985.

Robertson died at the age of 89 on February 27, 2013 in La Jolla, California from complications from lung cancer and pneumonia near his home in San Diego. His wife Susan wrote and published his life story in 2019 entitled "Bucking Hollywood".

*References:*

*Multiple Wikipedia searches.*



Dale Robertson. From [https://networthroll.com/blog2/dale-robertson-net-worth/#google\\_vignette](https://networthroll.com/blog2/dale-robertson-net-worth/#google_vignette).

## ROBERTSON'S RANT

### EXCERPTS FROM A DIARY—FIRST TRIP TO SCOTLAND (PART 4)

By Norman Dunkinson

Day 6 (Thursday, 31 May 2001)

This day saw us begin our journey into the highlands proper. We breakfasted alone in the library at Craighall, apparently the only guests at the time. Lachie, who by the account of Mrs. Rattray keeps odd hours, was nowhere about, so we bid farewell to Mrs. Rattray and Spike. Although Chris declined, I could not leave Craighall without descending to the riverbed and viewing the castle from below. I found five dead salmon there, but the climb was well worth it, and that other-worldly feeling came upon me once again. It was raining again and Chris was waiting in the car. We looked our last upon the Rattray arms chiseled above the door and the inscription or motto, the left side of which had fallen away, and that now read “for a blast.” Whether this fragment is actually part of the Rattray clan motto, or a clever caprice of Lachie’s, must be explored upon our return home (*Ed. Note—the Rattray motto is “super sidera votum,” or “my wishes are above the stars”*).



Norman Dunkinson at the Queen’s View, Pitlochry, Perthshire. May 31, 2001. Photo by Christine Dunkinson.

that the road did indeed end at Rannoch Station. We backtracked once again through the picturesque Donnachaidh countryside and turned northeast, avoiding Loch Tummel in search of Struan Kirk. Schehallion faded from sight.

Turning right at the signpost for “Old Struan,” we located Struan Kirk on the left. We observed the grave of the previous Chief of Clan Donnachaidh, Langton Robertson, and I took a few pebbles from the adjacent creek bed. Moving on, we encountered highland cattle in Dalwhinnie and drove quickly through the desolate, eerie lands between this town and Spean Bridge. Stopping for petrol, we stole a fleeting glimpse at Fort Wil-

The sun was shining and the day quite fine as we reached Pitlochry by mid-morning. After searching high and low throughout Edinburgh, we finally located green Scott tartan fabric and purchased a meter, from which Chris will make a kilt for Karli. I found a Signatory Caol Ila whiskey in a numbered bottle which I promptly purchased, after consulting with the whiskey specialist at Robertson’s of Pitlochry. Moving on, we visited the Pass of Killiecrankie and stood upon the Soldier’s Leap. We backtracked south and traveled west along the north side of Loch Tummel to the Queen’s View. After a short road construction delay, we entered Kinloch Rannoch and had lunch consisting of cream of leek soup and ham sandwiches at the Rannoch Hotel. The bartender confirmed what appeared on most maps,



Norman Dunkinson at Soldier’s Leap, Killiecrankie, Perthshire. May 31, 2001. Photo by Christine Dunkinson.

## EXCERPTS FROM A DIARY—FIRST TRIP TO SCOTLAND (PART 4) (CONTINUED)

liam and Ben Nevis and rounded the turn south into Argyll.

The scenery and feel changed dramatically as we left the mountains and entered the land of shore, loch, isle and sea. Glen Coe was cold and cloudy and we arrived there as the visitor's centre closed at 5:30pm. I did not mind, of course, as the experience of this place is in standing still and listening to the wind. Again, I took a rock from the River Coe and drove on through the rain.

Reaching Oban, we found the Beechgrove Hotel very easily and checked in with Mrs. Millar. Upon recommendation, we dined at the Studio Restaurant on prawn and scallop bisque, Japanese style prawns, and a baked seafood casserole of scallop, prawn, mussel, and crab. We walked about Oban, phoned home, and returned to the Beechgrove for a much-needed rest after approximately nine hours of travel.



Glen Coe, Ballachuilish, Argyll. May 31, 2001. Photo by Norman Dunkinson.

### Day 7 (Friday, 1 June 2001)



Oban, Argyll. June 1, 2001. Photo by Norman Dunkinson.

After breakfast and conversation with an English couple seated nearby, we walked about the Oban waterfront and purchased two tickets for the 12:00pm ferry from Oban to Craignure. With about an hour and half to kill, we continued our exploration of Oban, purchasing flower seeds at a local garden shop. Back at the terminal, we queued up and waited in the rain until the Caledonian McBrayne was ready to board. We claimed a seat by a window and I repaired to the bar area for a Tobermory and thence to the cafeteria for a hot mocha coffee for Chris. We lounged below deck long enough to dispose of these and then went upstairs to see the sights. The rain continued, but braving it was well worth it for the magnificent views afforded from above. A ruined tower loomed in the mist as we exited the bay and

entered the Firth of Lorne. We passed a lighthouse to the north, and Duart Castle to the south, as we approached Craignure.

We disembarked and somehow identified and boarded the correct bus (among many) for Tobermory. We were seat-

**ROBERTSON'S RANT****EXCERPTS FROM A DIARY—FIRST TRIP TO SCOTLAND (PART 4) (CONTINUED)**

ed on the seaward side and enjoyed the view of the eastern coast of Mull as we traveled north on the 849/848. After a stop at the ferry point for Lochaline and a few others, we were deposited at Tobermory by the distillery. With only about an hour and a half at our disposal, we proceeded north and east around the colorful crescent, browsed through the shops, and searched for something to eat. This was easier said than done, as the restaurants we encountered were closing between lunch and dinner (it was about 2:00pm). We backtracked to the tavern on the southern tip of the crescent and, now that Chris had an opportunity to dry off, I went back out in the rain, now pounding fiercely, to purchase my only souvenir from Scotland—a thick, chocolate-colored, hand-knit woolen sweater. Picking up other assorted gifts for family at home, I jogged quickly back to the warmth of the tavern.

I purchased a Tennent's and a Strongbow, ordered a meal, and sat back among the other travellers waiting to board the 4:00pm bus. Locals trotted in and out with their dogs as we became increasingly concerned that our meal would not arrive in time to eat it. Our appetizers did, at least, but the time ran to short and we had to board the bus, leaving a paid-for but uneaten meal somewhere in the kitchen. This was the only unpleasant event of our trip. Back on the bus, Chris watched in alarm as solitary sheep ambled dangerously close to the roadside.

Back at Craginure, we had longer than expected to spare due to the auto that had stalled on the ferry over, causing the day's schedule to run about one half hour late. We went to the only bar adjacent the terminal and a quick drink with the waiting crowd. We arrived back in Oban at about 6:15pm, stopped briefly at the Beechgrove to dry off, and headed back out for dinner. We had previously decided upon the Waterfront Restaurant at the pier and were not

disappointed. The restaurant featured seafood, of course, and a view of the chefs in the kitchen preparing the meals of patrons at break-neck speed. An army of waitresses worked all tables at once. We dined upon Dungeness crabs and langoustines and sauntered back in the direction of the Beechgrove. We decided we were not yet ready to call it a day, entered O'Donnell's Irish Bar near the hotel, and settled in at the only available table, next the men's room. We listened to a band playing American pop and classic rock covers, drank a few pints, and headed home.



Tobermory, Mull. June 1, 2001. Photo by Norman Dunkinson.

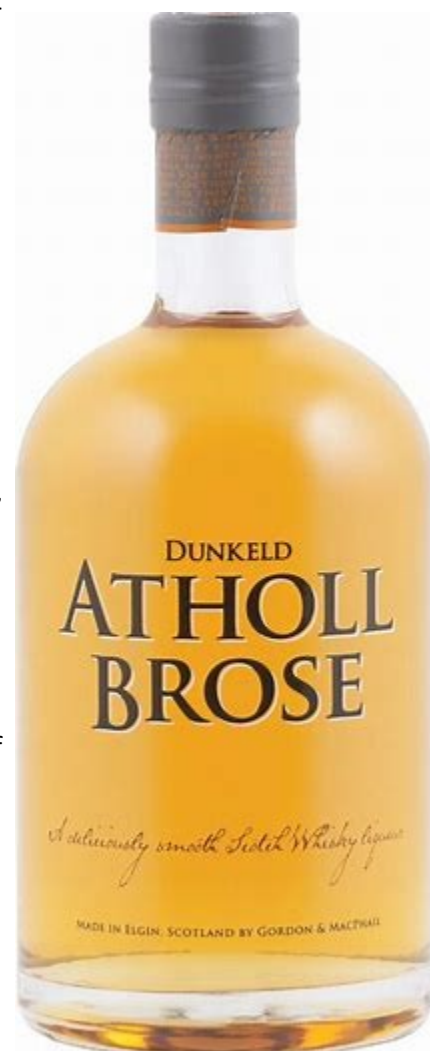
## IT'S ALL IN THE MIX

By Ian Wisniewski (from Whisky Magazine, Issue 31, June 9, 2003)

I prefer “proper whisky,” is the stance of the more militant malt brigade about whisky liqueurs, as though they are somehow improper compared to whisky. What kind of an attitude is that? Whisky liqueurs should be judged as a separate category with its own merits, and not as an “adulterated” form of whisky. Then anyone who wants to abstain from whisky liqueurs can do so with self-justification; based on the relevant criteria, which is the flavor delivery, rather than prejudice. As malts were originally served in the style of a liqueur, the category has genuine heritage and thus a legitimate status.

Admittedly, back then this sort of serving style stemmed entirely from necessity, rather than catering for particular preferences, as early distillation equipment was inevitably crude. This yielded a raw, rasping spirit drink, compromised of a host of unattractive aromas and flavors maturation was also an alien concept for early distillers, the only way of improving the spirit was adding ‘distractions’ to soften and sweeten the palate. Natural products such as herbs and heather honey became an essential element of a distiller’s repertoire. This also explains the reason for serving whisky in the form of a punch, a concept that reached Scotland (and the rest of the world) from India. The original definition of the Hindu panch, meaning ‘five,’ referred to the number of ingredients combined to prepare a punch: sugar, lime juice, spices, water, and alcohol. Drinking punch was invariably a group experience, as guests each took a sip from a loving cup (resembling a glass goblet, decoratively engraved) before passing it on. Another traditional recipe originally prepared on crofts was a combination of oatmeal, water, malt whisky and honey. This came to be known as Atholl Brose, named after the Earl of Atholl, who is said to have made strategic use of this concoction in 1475. He was sent to capture the rebellious Earl of Ross, who, as Lord of the Isles, ruled his domain like a sovereign, with a parliament established on Islay. With a death-threat hanging over him, the Earl of Ross took refuge on the hillsides. However, the Earl of Atholl discovered roughly where he was hiding. Intelligence sources also confirmed that he came down from the hillsides to drink water from a certain well, and this inspired a cunning ruse. The well was filled with a combination of honey, whisky, and oatmeal, which would have been a genuinely delightful surprise for any fugitive seeking refreshment. As the flavor inevitably encouraged the Earl of Ross to continue drinking more than he should, it was not long before he was in no condition to make a getaway, or even to mount any resistance.

As a traditional Hogmanay dram in the Highlands, there are various recipes for Atholl Brose, with Gordon & MacPhail’s version replacing oatmeal with certain herbs (unspecified), according to an “ancient and secret recipe.” And that marks an important distinction for malt-whisky lovers, who invariably want to



Gordon & MacPhail’s Dunkeld Atholl Brose. From <https://www.nataliemaclean.com/wine-reviews/dunkeld-atholl-brose-gordon-and-macphail/208410>.

## ROBERTSON'S RANT

### IT'S ALL IN THE MIX (CONTINUED)

learn everything they can about malts. Distillers are happy to oblige and discuss each stage of the malt whisky production process in whatever detail is required. But when it comes to whisky liqueurs, a degree of secrecy remains, particularly concerning the ingredients. The malt fan club might be more inclined to give whisky liqueurs more of a chance if the whiskies used were always identified.

But this is hardly standard practice, and some brands provide no more than an age statement for the whisky (which does at least confirm, to any sceptics, that “mature” rather than “adolescent” whisky is used). The question most frequently asked is “where does your whisky come from?” It is a huge marketing and selling point (you cannot just say malt whisky) and people are a lot happier knowing the type of malt and the distillery it comes from, says Charles Kenney, sales manager, Scottish Liqueur Centre, which uses Tomatin single malt in its range of malt whisky liqueurs.

If ingredients beyond the whisky are also part of your checklist, then the recipe for Orangeries has some alluring elements. Produced by John Glaser, blended Scotch is the basis for an infusion using organic Navellino oranges from the Italian region of Basilicata (I like it already!). Having previously made this infusion exclusively for friends and family, a

kitchen table being the “production unit,” John had to put in extra shifts when he prepared 250 bottles of Orangerie as a Christmas gift to friends in the trade last year. The preparation method was just as “hands on,” with John adding small strips of orange zest, personally peeled, followed by cassia bark and cloves, for an infusion lasting up to three weeks. Once strained and decanted, a few strips of fresh orange zest were added and sealed in the bottle, ensuring that the flavor continues to develop.

The concept also continues to develop, with limited amounts of Orangerie available from selected retailers, and John plans to release Scotch whisky infusions on a regular, commercial basis. Rather than appearing as mere desserts, various fruits are given a far more significant role by The Scottish Liqueur Company, using fresh Scottish fruit together with Scottish honey and Tomatin single malt. In Murray's Scottish Highland Liqueur, for example, sloes are the fruit in question, while the range of Scottish Country Liqueurs comprises blaeberry, bramble (blackberry) and cranberry-raspberry. These followed the company's inaugural liqueur, Columba Cream, made with malt whisky, honey and Scottish cream. Cream liqueurs have been thriving ever since Baileys (using Irish whiskey) was launched in 1974. Meanwhile, the line-up of Scottish options continues to grow, with Drum gray Highland Cream liqueur for example, combining Scottish double cream and Deanston single malt. Another recent addition is Drambuie Cream, comprising 15 to 17-year-old malts blended with fresh dairy cream and heather honey, launched in 2000. This was almost one hundred years after the original Drambuie, which in turn has even more historic origins. Being chronicled as the personal liqueur of Prince Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) provides a great start for Drambuie. Bonnie Prince Charlie raised the Jacobite standard at Glenfinnan in 1745 in an ill-fated attempt to overthrow the reigning Han-



Drambuie. From <https://bremerswineandliquor.com/shop/drambuie-liqueur-3/>.

## IT'S ALL IN THE MIX (CONTINUED)

overian family and reinstate the Stuart succession. After initial successes he was defeated on Culloden Moor in April 1746, and reached Skye in July. Sheltered by Captain John MacKinnon of Strathaird, legend has it that the Prince gave the clan his only remaining possession, a liqueur recipe, before departing for the safety of France.

For more than 150 years the family kept this recipe secret, until Malcolm MacKinnon came to Edinburgh and began producing the liqueur on a commercial basis in 1909. While the origin of the name is unclear, it evolved from the Gaelic “an dram buidheach” meaning “the drink that satisfies”. This particular form of satisfaction stems from malt whiskies and a hint of fragrant heather honey, within a secret recipe of herbs and spices. If you find that provenance heightens the appeal of a whisky liqueur, then the Cock o’ the North has impeccable credentials, being launched by the Marquis of Huntly in 1998. He is descended from the Gordon Clan; the Duke of Gordon sponsored the 1823 Act of Parliament, which reformed the Scotch whisky industry. Ancestry also provided a name for this liqueur: the chief of the Gordon Clan has been known as the ‘Cock o’ the North’ since the 16th century, due to the family’s strength and prowess in battle.

According to family legends, the Gordons blended their whisky with blueberry juice (i.e., bilberries, native Highland berries) and other ingredients. This created a fortifying tonic, which was also offered to men when going in to battle and on long journeys. While various whisky liqueurs benefit from a fascinating heritage, what does the future hold for the category? Will brands find favor with more whisky drinkers, by offering a distinct perspective on a familiar favorite? And how successfully can they appeal to a broader drinking public? In some cases, the answer is they can do so very successfully. From our marketing and direct sales across the country, we are converting people to the brand who are whisky drinkers, non-whisky drinkers, and liqueur drinkers, says Alistair Aboyne, managing director, Cock o’ the North.

Another asset which should benefit the category is the current cocktail revival, dating from the mid-1990s and continually accelerating, which has brought various liqueurs to the fore. Some whisky liqueurs are already thriving based on greater versatility, whether served over ice or as a cocktail ingredient. Moreover, we tend to be more experimental when drinking cocktails, and consequently more prepared to try something unfamiliar. This means that cocktails provide a prime opportunity for liqueurs to be “discovered,” and then, hopefully, valued for their own merits.



Cock O’ the North. From <https://www.thewhiskyexchange.com/p/5228/cock-of-the-north-malt-liqueur>.



From [https://wanderwisdom.com/travel-destinations/thejockspot\\_10\\_scottish\\_jokes\\_and\\_proverbs](https://wanderwisdom.com/travel-destinations/thejockspot_10_scottish_jokes_and_proverbs).

**CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY  
MID-ATLANTIC BRANCH**

19354 Barrens Rd. S.  
Stewartstown, PA 17363

Email: [ngdiv@verizon.net](mailto:ngdiv@verizon.net)

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>
Scottish Christmas Walk	Alexandria, VA	Dec 2nd

## CELTIC EVENTS & GAMES—2024

<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
Dills Celtic Festival	Dillsburg, PA	Apr 13th
Southern Maryland Celtic Festival	St. Leonard, MD	Apr 27th
Colonial Highland Gathering	Fair Hill, MD	May 18th
Garrett County Celtic Festival	Friendsville, MD	Jun 1st
Carroll County Celtic Festival	Westminster, MD	Jun 8th