

ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1
FEBRUARY 2024

SCOTTISH GAMES RECIPE—PARLIES

by Jim Fargo

Have you ever wondered when planning to attend a Scottish festival, if our clan convener would appreciate your bringing a tasty treat to share at the Donnachaidh Diner?

The immediate answer is YES. Herein a sample treat called “Parlies” or Scottish Parliament Cakes.

The ingredients are: 8 ounces of flour, 4 ounces of butter or margarine, 1 egg, 2 ounces of sugar and 2 tablespoons of golden syrup. An optional choice is adding 1 teaspoon of ground ginger.

Set oven to 350F. Grease a baking tray. Cream together the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl. Add the flour, egg and syrup and the optional ginger and mix well by hand or blender. Drop dessert size spoonfuls onto the baking tray, leaving room for expansion.

Bake for 15-20 minutes until light golden brown. Place on a wire rack to cool.

Lastly and the most importantly, bring them to the clan tent for all of us to enjoy.

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:

Justin B. Dobson

Carol A. Lucian

Jamie A. Roberts

Erin Schafer

Karen S. Layne

Christopher Reid

John K. Robertson

Keith Soares

Branch Officers

President:

Sam Kistler

Vice President:

Tom Due

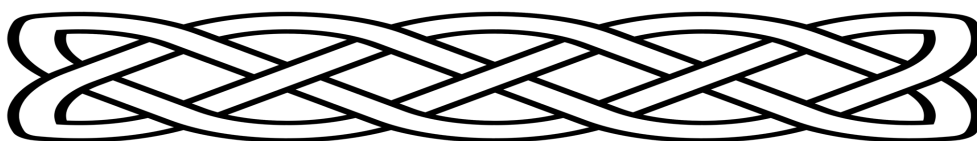
Secretary/Treasurer:

Norman Dunkinson



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OPENING OF PERTH MUSEUM

By Jim Fargo

The former Perth City Hall has been transformed into the new Perth Museum after a 27 million pound upgrade (about \$34 million). It opens to the public on March 30th and will be the permanent home for the Stone of Scone or "Stone of Destiny" which was used in Scottish and English coronations for centuries, most recently for King Charles III last year.



Clan Donnachaidh at the Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk, Alexandria, Virginia, December 2, 2023. Photo by Christine Dunkinson.

SCOTS HUMOR

Old Angus quit playing golf on Sundays and began going to church. The minister, grateful to see his regular attendance, said, "Angus, it makes me feel good to see you and your wife here every Sunday."

"Weel," said Angus, "I'd rather hear your sermons than hers."

THE RANT OF STRUAN ROBERTSON

by James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

I was sent the following by James Irvine Robertson, editor of our Clan Annual.

The name of our Branch newsletter is based on a strathspey tune called “Robertson’s Rant.” Below are the chorus and six verses to “The Rant of Struan Robertson” as published in 1902 by the Celtic Monthly, volume 10, page 200. This was found by James on Electric Scotland.

Of rare rants for feet in fettle,
Rare rants for micht and mettle,
A rare rare rant I’ll ettle,
The rant, the rant of Struan.

He cocked his bonnet to his head,
Gar fling the bagpipes ower his plaid,
And wi’ a stoundin’ stamp he played,
The rant, the rant of Struan.

He played the rant wi’ birr and bum,
He played the rant wi’ stir and strum,
He played and played till dirlin’ dumb,
The rant, the rant of Struan.

They cocked their elbows to their sides,
Flew over the floor wi’ slantin’ slides,
Syne stood and flung wi’ stamps and strides,
The rant, the rant of Struan.

They danced the rant wi’ micht and main,
They danced the rant wi’ feet fu’ fain,
They danced, and danced, and danced again
The rant, the rant of Struan.

They hooched the rant wi’ sounding cry,
They hooched the rant wi’ thoombs snapped high,
They hooched, and hooched, and hooched till dry,
The rant, the rant of Struan.

Thy flung sae hard they cast their shoon,
They flung sae high they cracked their croon,
They flung, and flung wi’ hose fa’en doon,
The rant, the rant of Struan.



Alexander Robertson of Struan (c. 1670-1749). From <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/alexander-robertson-of-struan-c-16701749-jacobite-poet-and-clan-chieftain-213312>.

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BRUSHY BILL ROBERTS

By Jim Fargo

One afternoon while chatting in the bookstore and enjoying a wee dram, I learned that the infamous outlaw and gun-fighter better known as 'Billy the Kid' used several other alias 'William H. Bonney' and 'Henry or Kid Antrim', during his outlaw career. A little research provided the following.

Billy the Kid's real name was Henry McCarty (1859-1881) and he was the son of Patrick and Catherine McCarty. Born on December 31, 1859 in New York City, his family later moved west to Kansas. He was orphaned at the age of 15 and his first arrest was for stealing food at age 16 in 1875. Following his father's death, his mother married William Antrim in 1873 in the New Mexico Territory. On his mother's death from tuberculosis in September 16, 1874, his step-father abandoned William and his younger brother Joseph in Arizona.



Billy the Kid and Brushy Bill Roberts. From <https://www.insidehook.com/culture/brushy-bill-roberts-billy-kid>.

Following the aimless life of a meandering cowboy, he left Arizona a wanted man and eventually arrived in the town of Lincoln, New Mexico. During the Lincoln County War, he joined merchant John Tunstall's "Regulators" against the Dolan/Murphy merchant gang. This commercial rivalry turned into a vigilante feud until all the merchant principals were dead. In December 1880 he was captured, tried and convicted of killing Sheriff William J. Brady and sentenced to hang in May 1881. On April 18, 1881, he killed two of his jailers, broke out of jail and fled north to the cattle rustler haven and former army camp of Fort Sumner. He was eventually shot and presumably

killed by Sheriff Pat Garrett on July 14, 1881 in Fort Sumner, New Mexico and buried in the Old Fort Sumner Cemetery.

After his death, the legend that he had survived grew and a number of men claimed to be him. One of these claimants was 'Brushy Bill' Roberts, also known as William Henry Roberts, Oliver L. Roberts and several other variant names who died of a heart attack on December 27, 1950. Roberts had applied for a pardon for Billy the Kid, although his claim was rejected by New Mexico Governor Thomas J. Mabry earlier in 1950.

The "Billy the Kid Museum" is still open in Roberts' hometown of Hico in Hamilton County, Texas in support of his claim. Roberts was born on August 26, 1879 in Buffalo Gap, Texas. That birth date provides the answer to the validity of his claim.

Postscript: Interesting fact is that Lew Wallace, the author of the classic, "Ben Hur", was appointed to the Governorship of New Mexico in 1878. He had been a Major General in the Union Army. He declared martial law in New Mexico and signed the arrest warrant for Billy the Kid.

References:

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

SIR WILLIAM DOBBIE (1879—1964)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Lieutenant General Sir William George Shedden Dobbie was born on July 12, 1879 in Madras, British India to his parents, Agatha (nee Monteith) and William Hugh Dobbie of the Indian Civil Service. Sent to England to live with relatives, young William won a scholarship to Charterhouse School in Surrey England where he received an education that enabled him to qualify to the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich then to the Royal School of Military Engineering at Chatham.

Commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Royal Engineers in August 1899, he was sent to South Africa in 1901 for the Second Boer War where he was wounded. During the First World War, Dobbie received several promotions and by January 1917 was brevetted to lieutenant colonel. In November 1918, as the staff officer on duty, his was the only signature on the cease-fire telegram that was sent to all troops ending the war. When asked what he did during the Great War, Dobbie replied "I stopped the bloody thing!"

During the interwar years, Dobbie was appointed commander of the Cairo Brigade with the rank of brigadier in 1928, major general in 1933 as Commandant of the School of Military Engineers (1933-35), and appointed General Officer Commanding Malaya Command from 1935 until 1939 when regulations deemed him to old and he had to retire. While stationed in Palestine (1928-32), during British intervention to restore order in the Arab-Jewish riots of 1928, the religious Dobbie optimistically remarked that "This will be the easiest war... We will have to fight only four days a week. The Arabs won't fight on Friday, the Jews on Saturday and Dobbie certainly won't on Sunday."

Due to the war, Dobbie was brought back from retirement in April 1940 and was offered the positions of Governor and Commander-in-chief of Malta. Major General D.M.W. Beak arrived and took over in the winter of 1942 as commander-in-chief of the military garrison.

Described as a dour Scot, Dobbie was criticized by London for perceived delays in implementing food-rationing, lack of sufficient bomb shelters and delay in developing an efficient civil-defense system. Dobbie continued as Governor of Malta until his replacement arrived and his second retirement began in May 1942.

On Dobbie's arrival on British Malta, the defensibility of the island was in question because of the presumed ease with which Italy could overrun it. When Italy declared war, Prime Minister Winston Churchill responded to Dobbie's requests for planes and reinforcements and Fortress Malta became a crucial element of war in the Mediterranean. Hitler decided that Malta had to be permanently secured after his airborne assault and planned occupation of Crete in May 1941 was finally completed. Over two months in early 1942, there were over 500 Luftwaffe air raids on Malta as the Germans attempted to keep their convoy supply lines open from Sicily to Tripoli for Rommel's Afrikakorps



Sir William Dobbie. From <https://malayacommand.blogspot.com/2011/09/defences-of-singapore-and-malaya-as.html>.

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SIR WILLIAM DOBBIE (CONTINUED)

campaigns. Morale on the besieged island was sustained by Dobbie's nightly inspirational and religious broadcasts to the Maltese people encouraging resistance to the furious bombing assaults and his faith in the justice of the allied cause.

In early May 1942, Churchill replaced the almost 63 year old Dobbie, who was exhausted and unwell from two years of a low-calorie rationed diet due to British inability to regularly provision Malta, with Viscount Gort, who then served as Governor of both Gibraltar and Malta. The following month, June 1942, Britain's 2nd South African Division surrendered Tobruk to Rommel's forces.

During Sir William Dobbie's military career, he was awarded Officer of the Order of Leopold (Belgium), Knight of the Legion of Honour (France), Distinguished Service Order, Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath and Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George.

The best words about Dobbie's fortitude during the successful defense of Malta came from himself when he said in February 1945 to the Empire Club of Canada: "One of the reasons that we were able to hold Malta and why the Union Jack is still flying there was that everyone in the island pulled together."

Sir William Dobbie died on October 3, 1964 in Kensington, London. He was buried in Charlton Cemetery in south-east London. His wife, Sybil, and other members of his family are also buried there.

References:

Jackson, W.G.F., "The Battle for North Africa 1940-1943", Mason/Charter Publishers, Inc, 1975, p. 245.

Keegan. John, "The Second World War", Penguin Books, NY, 1990, pp. 161, 331.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

SCOTTISH GAMES RECIPE—SHORTBREAD

By Jim Fargo

Please For those of you who have visited the clan tent before, you know that Evan Duncan brings a tin of his "Duncan Shortbread" to each festival. While I do not have this ancient recipe handed down from his Duncan ancestors, here is another version to try.

The ingredient mix is: 4 ounces of butter, 2 ounces of sugar, 6 ounces of flour, and 6 ounces of ground rice.

Set oven to 350F. Cream the butter and sugar together in a bowl. Gradually sift in the flour and ground rice, kneading the mixture into a ball. On a floured surface roll or pat the dough into a round, 1/2 inch thick. Place on a plain baking tray. Pinch up the edges and prick the top with a fork. Bake for about 35-40 minutes until firm and pale golden. While still warm, cut into triangles and sprinkle with sugar.

As Evan does not attend every event in our six-state region, please make some and bring them to the clan tent to share with your clan cousins and visiting guests!



Shortbread. From eatsmarter.com.

WITCHES WELL PLAQUE

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

The Castlehill is where most of the burning of witches took place in Old Town, Edinburgh between 1479 and 1722.



The Witches Well. From <https://hiddenscotland.co/listings/the-witches-well/>.

In 1894, John Duncan, was asked to produce a bronze plaque to commemorate this fact. The plaque was actually meant to be a drinking fountain and was originally attached to the westward wall at the lower end of the Castle Esplanade at what was until 1996 the Castlehill reservoir (facing the Esplanade). The plaque was affixed to the converted wall of what is now the Tartan Weaving Mill building in 1912. Although no water flows through it, the plaque shows the two sides of witchcraft. On the left hand side, depicts the evil witch, while the right hand side depicts the good witch. Known as the 'Witches' Well', it is a memorial to all the accused witches burned at the stake in Edinburgh.

The 'Witches' Well' was commissioned by Sir Patrick Geddes and the model for the plaque was designed by his painter friend, John Duncan, R.S.A. (1866-1945). The bronze relief front features a snake curled around the heads of Hygeia, Greek goddess of good health, and her father Aesculapius, god of medicine. Other parts of the plaque feature a foxglove plant, healing hands, trees and the evil eye. The spout is below the snake's head. Duncan's model for the Well plaque is in the City Art Centre, Edinburgh.

Postscript: The referenced book was written by the Cadies, those guides who give tours of the historic buildings with appropriate ta-

les of their supernatural history from Edinburgh Castle down the spine of the Royal Mile to Holyrood. On your next trip to Scotland, try to schedule the tour and visit the Esplanade to see the plaque.

References:

Mitchell, Robin, "Adam Lyal's Witchery Tales", Moubray House Press, Edinburgh, 1988, p. 48.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.

The Witches Well Plaque. From https://www.flickr.com/photos/evil_cheese_scientist/4703610026.



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EXCERPTS FROM A DIARY—FIRST TRIP TO SCOTLAND (PART 5)

By Norman Dunkinson

Day 8 (Saturday, 2 June 2001)

Saturday dawned bright and promising. We breakfasted again with the English couple and I placed a call, with the assistance of Mrs. Millar, to the Castle Riding Centre in Ardrishaig in hopes of arranging a trail ride at our destination in Knapdale. I was lucky in that, though told at first that would be unable to accommodate us, they had a place for two riders with a trip planned for the mid-afternoon. Mrs. Millar presented us with a bottle of Jacob's Creek Chardonnay, an Australian wine, as we bid adieu to the Beechgrove.



Carnaserrie Castle, Argyll. June 2, 2001. Photo by Norman Dunkinson.

entrance to the Brenfield Estates Riding Center, before stopping for lunch at the Argyll Arms Hotel. We were seated in a cozy room with a small bar by the fireplace, surrounded by photos and paintings of ships and other nautical devices. We ordered the roast beef carver from our matronly hostess who engaged us in conversation after our meal. We mentioned our horseback riding trip and replied that Tove, the owner and instructor, was a Scandinavian immigrant and quite the eccentric. On mentioning our recent marriage, we were both treated to a dram of Famous Grouse.

We descended from Oban south through Argyll, encountering some of the most beautiful scenery of all our visit. The A816 brought us below Carnaserrie Castle, a ruined 16th century tower north of Kilmartin where we first encountered the disinfectant basins—a precautionary measure against the spread of hoof and mouth. We were the only visitors at the time and we posed for photos on the slope below the castle. The majority of the castle was accessible, including the tower, like Castle Gloom, three days before. A sign told us that Carnaserrie was besieged upon a time. We continued south to an ancient ring of standing stones, the only site where access was completely denied due to hoof and mouth. Further down the Glen of Kilmartin was a burial cairn, remarkably well preserved (or restored), despite the signpost indicating that visitors had despoiled its stones for many years. I crawled inside and found nothing of note. Dunadd Fort crowned both our tour of the Glen and the surrounding countryside. This site was the seat of the Scots Kingdom of Dalriada upon their migration from Northern Ireland around 500 A.D. We clambered to the summit, found the carved footprint and the stone basin, but not the boar.

We passed Lochgilphead and entered Ardrishaig, identifying both Fascaladale and the



Burial Cairn, Kilmartin Glen. June 2, 2001. Photo by Christine Dunkinson.

EXCERPTS FROM A DIARY—FIRST TRIP TO SCOTLAND (PART 5) (CONTINUED)

At Brenfield we met Tove, who was far less intimidating than our hostess of the Arms had led us to believe. Tove instructed us to wander about until the guide and other riding group returned. After exploring the grounds and stables, we were ushered into the kitchen to sign our waivers and receive some general instruction, while Tove provided tea to a stablehand. We were also introduced to Gordon and Sharon Herron, a young Glasgow couple with whom we were to ride.

We were escorted to the stables, fitted for helmets, and introduced to our mounts—I was to ride “Monty,” and Chris “Vanitis.”

After a few turns about the yard, our guide, a knowledgeable English fellow whose diminutive stature and slight frame marked him as a former jockey, felt us ready for the trail.

We ascended a ridge and found ourselves going up and down upon the well-marked trails in the coniferous forest. We cantered a number of



Dunadd Fort, Kilmartin Glen. June 2, 2001. Photo by Norman Dunkinson.



Chris at Dunadd Fort, Kilmartin Glen. June 2, 2001. Photo by Norman Dunkinson.

times and galloped on occasion too, each with varying success. Based upon our respective mounts, Gordon’s horse, at one point, refused to move, and our guide explained and demonstrated that “horse whispering” was bunk and that a sound talking to, in no uncertain terms, was more in order. When the horse did move, I had an opportunity to chat with Gordon and learn something of his work and interests. Gordon explained that he sold computer software and that he regularly visited the States, particularly Houston, Texas.

There, he had been warned not

to wear his kilt in public, lest he invite displeasure, ridicule and worse from the macho Texans. He did so anyway, to

ROBERTSON'S RANT**EXCERPTS FROM A DIARY—FIRST TRIP TO SCOTLAND (PART 5) (CONTINUED)**

no harm of course, and we continued our discussion and talked of the popularity of Scottish events in the U.S., genealogy, and clan affiliation and tartans. Gordon remarked that many Scots, particularly city dwellers, had little appreciation for their country and the wealth of history therein.

Our guide decided that, our performance thus far to his liking, we were ready for a cross-country jaunt through wooded streambeds and grassy fields. We acquitted ourselves well. Vanitis was the least troublesome of the horses, though she did allow Chris to fall during the dismount, even when expressly instructed otherwise by our guide. Chris was fine, fortunately, and we paid our respects to our guide, the Herrons, and the stablehand and drove the mile or so to Fascalale House for our last evening before departing for Glasgow and plane home.

Fascalale was nothing less than we anticipated—a 19th century Victorian manor house of quiet beauty, set amidst an extensive arboretum, gardens, and croquet lawns,

with a lovely view of Loch Fyne. We had reserved the tasteful and spacious Islay Suite and were escorted there by our host David Davies. The entire property exudes an air of understated elegance and charm. We rested a while and drove north to Lochgilphead in search of dinner. Finding nothing there, we remembered the recommendation of our trail guide for Tayvallich and proceeded north and west along the Crinan Canal. A tall-masted sailing ship stood to in the bay with many smaller rowboats and fishing vessels lining the shore by the Tayvallich Inn. We both enjoyed the scallops, served with the orange appendage attached, and I sampled the smoked salmon, less to my liking. Upon our return, we turned south, following a sign for Castle Sween, and continued for about a half hour until Chris determined that there was no castle, no sign, and that the road led nowhere. I turned the car about on the narrow road, saw a large red fox jump across the road, and navigated our way back to Fascalale and a quiet evening of British television.

Day 9 (Sunday, 3 June 2001)

Unfortunately, our time at Fascalale was far too fleeting. We walked a bit in the gardens before loading the luggage into the car and taking our leave of Mr. Davies (we never saw Mrs. Davies). We traveled north from Lochgilphead on the A83, talking continuously in an attempt to counteract our sad and wistful thoughts of departure. We caught a brief glimpse of Inverary Castle on the left and stopped in the town to de-trash the car. Chris gave her wedding bouquet to the waters of Loch Fyne. Our descent through the Highlands brought us to Tarbet where we connected with the A82 on the west side of Loch Lomond. We paused briefly at a yacht club for some final photographs and were

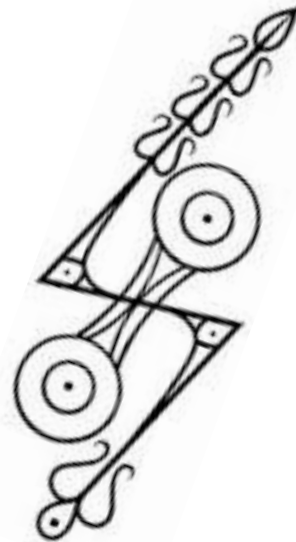


Horseback Riding at Brenfield Riding Center, Ardrishaig. June 2, 2001. Photo by Norman Dunkinson.

EXCERPTS FROM A DIARY—FIRST TRIP TO SCOTLAND (PART 5) (CONTINUED)



soon at the rental return at the airport. We deposited the Omega that served us well throughout our entire stay and took a shuttle to the airport proper. We lunched at the British equivalent of Ruby Tuesdays or TGI Fridays, and I polished off the remainder of the Macallan's I had purchased in Blairgowrie. It was no surprise that both of us agreed, during a game we played, that our wedding day and the evening at Craighall was the most memorable event of our lives.



Fascadale House, Ardrishaig. June 2, 2001. Photo by Norman Dunkinson.



Loch Fyne. June 3, 2001. Photo by Norman Dunkinson.





**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—2024 (FIRST HALF OF SEASON)

<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
Tartan Day Celebration	Bethel Park, PA	Apr 6th
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
Wild & Wonderful Celtic Festival	Beverly, WV	Jun 15th
Celtic Fling & Highland Games	Manheim, PA	Jun 22nd-23rd