

ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



VIRGINIA SCOTTISH GAMES AND FESTIVAL REPORT

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

The second half of our Games Season began with the 42nd annual Festival at Great Meadow in The Plains on Labor Day weekend (Sept. 5-6). Arriving at 8:00am on Saturday morning, we found ourselves situated beside our House of Gordon cousins at the end of a clan row. Both days were typical early September (hot and humid) weather but fortunately no rain. Again this year, our location was about 50 feet from the entertainment tent which is an ideal site for listening to the celtic music coming from that tent throughout the weekend. It's great to have the clan tents surrounding the highland athletics field so the clans can watch the athletic competitions. This year we unveiled new design clan t-shirts for sale and did a brisk business both days in outfitting clanfolk.

As usual we combined our Donnachaidh Diner with the Gordon Grill and everyone in both clans were well fed. Much thanks to **Evan and Rosalie Duncan** for hosting our Diner again this year and to **Dave and Lois Todd** for hosting the Gordon Grill.

The Scottish Fiddling tent was located over by the Highland Dancing area, near the main entrance, about as far from our location as possible. We again sponsored the "Ronald Duncan Gonnella Memorial" 2nd place Open trophy this year. This year's winner was **Sean Heely** (see photo, page 2) who also took Best Air and Fiddler -of-the-Day in the adult category. This year we had clan parades on both days which are always fun for the participants and well received by the spectators.

Lots of friends, visitors and clan folk came by our double tent site each day. In addition, over the course of the weekend we were visited by four Lindsay visitors and, through email address exchanges, I hope they can have a Clan Lindsay tent here next year. **President Sam Kistler** was attending the Carlisle Games in PA on Saturday, but was with us on Sunday. We were pleased to welcome five new members who joined our Clan Society: **Brenda Abbot (Robinson), Kelly Flores (Roberts), Marvin Reed, Heather Robertson and Joy Rudolph (Duncan)**.

This festival has always been well run with lots of attractions (living history, British car show, moon bounce for kids, shepherding, etc.) for the whole family to enjoy. It is well worth attending and I hope you can include this festival in your 2016 calendar!

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Sam Kistler

Vice President:

Ron Bentz

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Norman Dunkinson

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Sean Heely, winner of the Ronald Duncan Gonnella Memorial 2nd place Open trophy at the Virginia Scottish Games and Festival in The Plains, Virginia



Clan Donnachaidh in the Parade of Clans at the Central Virginia Celtic Festival and Games in Richmond, Virginia

SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK PARADE REPORT

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

Our last Branch event of 2015 was the Scottish Christmas Walk in Olde Town Alexandria VA which is always held on the first Saturday of December. The Luray VA contingent (**Andrew Fargo, Dan Fouse, Robert Knight** and myself) arrived about 8:30am to crisp sunny weather. After having breakfast at Subway at Market Square with **President Sam Kistler**, we headed off for our assigned position in the parade. For the next hour or so we socialized with our gathering clanfolk and chatted with neighboring clans.

Although the Parade starts at 11 sharp, we stepped off about 11:40am with about 15 marchers. Leading off our clan unit was **Steve Hoffman** carrying our wolf head totem and myself with the clan banner. **President Sam Kistler** was immediately behind us flanked by the Duncan and Hunting Robertson tartan flags carried by **Steve Duncan** and **Dan Fouse**. As we continued along the 1.25 mile parade route we more than doubled in size as clanfolk kept joining our unit. During stops along the route we practiced the clan war cry to the enjoyment of the crowds. As we passed the reviewing stand at Market Square, we gave a hearty "Fierce When Roused" to the honored guests.

Upon the conclusion of the parade, our 30 plus marchers headed for the traditional clan luncheon held at the Fish Market Inn (105 King Street). We were joined by members of clans Wallace, Scott and the Scottish American Military Society and had a delicious lunch. The Fish Market staff outdid themselves as we had anticipated a maximum of 30 to attend and had a record 62 people enjoying the luncheon this year!

December 5th was a great day for a parade and it was a spectacular way to close out 2015!

GOLFING GREAT - ALLAN ROBERTSON (1815-1859)

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

I recently came across a golfing book entitled “St. Andrews and Golf” and was pleased to learn about a Scotsman named Allan Robertson. He was the champion golfer of his day and is considered the first golf professional. It was interesting to me to note that his golfing partner was a Morris which is a sept of the clan Morrison and the clan of my son Ed’s wife Kimberly.

Allan was born on September 11, 1815, to a family of golf ball makers and caddies in Saint Andrews that had made feather balls by hand since the early 1700s. There was an ongoing trade with America with hickory shafts being exported to Scotland and golf clubs and balls being imported back as early as the 1740s.

“While other makers imprinted balls with their last names, Robertson just stamped ‘ALLAN’ in capital letters on his golf balls.” The feather golf balls were expensive (costing about three times the cost of a single club). The high cost meant that only the wealthy could afford to play. This changed in 1848 when the gutta-percha resin became available. Imported from Malaysia, the rubber-like sap was collected by cutting the tree’s bark. The collected resin could be heated and shaped either by hand or in a mold then was allowed to harden into its new shape. The gutty ball cost half the price of a club and this led to a dramatic growth in the number of golfers in Scotland.

Allan was one of the first golf professionals. When not making golf balls in the 1840s and 1850s, he would compete in challenge matches for money, often partnering with his apprentice, Tom Morris. In 1848, they fell out over the use by Tom Morris of the new gutty ball. Tom had broken his promise never to use the new ball in play which threatened Robertson’s trade. Tom Morris then set up his own shop in Prestwick and made both types of golf balls. We know him today as “Old Tom” Morris to differentiate him from his golfing son “Young Tom.” Allan was the first to introduce an iron club for pitching the ball to the green. It was Young Tom who perfected the use of the niblick to stop a ball quickly on a hard green.

In the early 1850s, Allan too began producing and using the new ball. There was a great rivalry between the St. Andrews and Musselburgh courses and there were matches between the two clubs that drew large crowds. In July 1843, Allan played a match with Willie Dunn over the Old Course at St. Andrews. The match was over 10 consecutive days of two rounds per day. On the tenth day, with Allan ahead by one round, he won the morning round and thus being ahead two rounds with one to play was declared the winner. In 1849, Allan and Tom Morris took on the formidable twins, Willie and Jamie Dunn of Musselburgh, for the then huge stake of 400 pounds. The Duns won on their home course and the Morris/Robertson team won at St. Andrews. The deciding match at the ‘neutral’ course of North Berwick was won by Tom and Allan. The pair were never beaten in foursome play.

Using the gutty ball, Allan in 1858 was the first person to break 80 (shot 79) on the Old Course. That round occurred just a few months before his death from jaundice, and a little more than a year before the first Open Championship was held in 1860 at Prestwick. It was stated that, had he lived, “there was little doubt that Allan would have captured the title. He was that good.” After his death, there were those who sought an official event to find a successor to his unofficial title of professional player. Prestwick inaugurated the first Open. Allan is buried in the cemetery on the grounds of the St. Andrews Cathedral.

References:

Campbell, Malcolm, “Scottish Golf Book”, Sports Publishing, 1999, pp 19, 205.

Olman, John M, “St. Andrews and Golf”, Market Street Press, 1995, pp 86-87.

Stirk, David, “Golf, The History of an Obsession”, Phaidon Press Ltd, 1987, pp 32-33.

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EDINBORO HIGHLAND GAMES AND SCOTTISH FESTIVAL REPORT

By Thomas Due

The Edinboro Games opened on a cool morning the 1st weekend of September after Labor Day. The weather would prove its traditional role in our Scotland-for-a-day experience, with on and off drizzle throughout the early afternoon.

This year's clan area was underneath a huge tent! With 12 clans registered, there was plenty of space to have the clans in 2 rows set back-to-back through the center with plenty of room for visitors to peruse the booths without being subject to the weather. Our oldest is in his 4th year at the college and, once again, we were the gathering point for him and a multitude of friends throughout the day. It was nice having many hands for set up and tear down as well as help with the stamping of passports.

The day was filled with inquiries and lots of reference work to find which clan visitors were associated with, as well as a number of "We are Scottish?" statements/questions when finding an unexpected name in the books.

An enjoyable day was had by all in attendance. The clan participation ended with the traditional gathering of conveners to thank the Stewarts for their work running the clan area, discussions for improvements, and possibly a wee dram.

It was at this end of the day meeting that this year's honored clan announces next year's honored clan. The honored clan for 2016 is --- Clan Donnachaidh! We look forward to many members coming to show support at the 2016 games!

CENTRAL VIRGINIA CELTIC FESTIVAL & GAMES REPORT

By Sam Kistler

The much anticipated Richmond Games (now called "The Central Virginia Celtic Festival and Highland Games") at the Richmond Raceway Complex in Richmond, Virginia, got underway on Saturday, October 24th, and went through the 25th. We arrived on Friday the 23rd around noon time to find everything in order. The folks at "Blind Squirrel Productions" had everything set up and labeled. The only thing we (the clan folk) needed to do was break out our displays and set up for the next day.

I had all the display material from **Jim Fargo** via the **Andrew Fargo** delivery system a few days beforehand. This as Jim had some matters in Luray that could not be avoided. Saturday morning broke clear with some overcast and as the day went along it was beautiful. Things went fast and furious at the tent with a lull in the action now and then. **Bob Land** drove up from the Tampa, Florida, area to visit friends and help out for the day. Bob also brought along his sidekick "Nika" (a black Scottie). Their tenure was short as Bob had to return to Florida on Sunday morning.

Great help was given by **Patrick MacRae** and his lovely wife during the entire weekend of manning the tent. Patrick comes to us from the California Clan Donnachaidh branch and was a leader in that organization. During the day many Clan folk dropped by both old and new to the games. All were given a warm Donnachaidh welcome. **Evan and Rosalie Duncan** were there with the Donnachaidh Diner as usual and their efforts, as always, were greatly appreciat-

ed by the hungry Clansmen. Evan and Rosalie have been stalwart providers of the diner for years, but I fear this will be the last “Games” for them for a while, as unfortunately some health problems have arisen that will keep them at home for the time being.

Sunday started cold and wet. By the time 11:00am rolled around, I could stand out in the street between the Clan tents and see no one at all. Then the noon time rolled around and the skies started to break up; then it was back to fast and furious again. This continued right up to around 4:30pm and now it was time to start packing up the camp. Much help again from Patrick and Robert of the Clan MacNaughton. We had the tent secured with all packed up in no time. Thank you all for a great weekend and we look forward to an even better outing in 2016!

CEUD MILE FAILTE (100,000 WELCOMES)!

We’d like to welcome the following 23 new and returning members who joined us or renewed since the last report:

Brenda Abbott	John Bullach	Ashby Carver	Steven Duncan	Kelly Flores
Anne Furman	Paul Haffley	Ellen Hansen	Karen Layne	Robert McRobbie
J. Mott Robertson Jr.	Marvin Reed	Jennifer Reed-Grimmet t		
Taylor Roberts	Heather Robertson	John Robertson	George Robertson	Laura Robertson
Richard Robertson	Joy Rudolph	Darla Texter	Marjorie Wells	John Zimmerman

LIGONIER HIGHLAND FESTIVAL REPORT

By Thomas Due

This year’s Ligonier Highland games at Idlewild park in Ligonier, Pennsylvania, was the fourth weekend of September instead of the third, causing it to coincide with a number of other events this year, including Celticfest. Recently it is held the third week after Labor Day. If Labor Day is late, as it was this year, then there is disarray in the universe! Or at least in the Scottish games circles.

Due to this, attendance at the clan tent was off from any year in my memory, at least the last 15 games! Without Sam, Jim, Harry, Evan and Rosalie, not to mention a host of others, the games was just not the same.

Despite the lack of many dear friends, the day was grand and the showing for the parade was respectable. In typical Fargo fashion, we passed the review stand with a resounding “fierce, when roused” battle cry with swords in the air!

The games appeared to be somewhat light in attendance overall. The clan tents appeared to be as numerous as expected, although I felt a little lost with only one canopy set up this year...

There were visits from many from previous games, both clan folk and friend alike. A generous sharing of spirits was available from and for a number of guests. It is always an opportunity to try a splash of something new, some good and some better. The weather provided a fine day and a great experience.



Dunkeld Cathedral

**CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY
MID-ATLANTIC BRANCH**

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CELTIC EVENTS AND GAMES—2016

<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
Southern Maryland Celtic Festival	St. Leonard, MD	Apr 30th
NCWV Scottish Festival and Celtic Gathering	Clarksburg, WV	May 6th-8th
Frederick Celtic Festival	Mt. Airy, MD	May 14th
Colonial Highland Gathering	Fair Hill, MD	May 21th
Celtic Fling & Highland Games	Manheim, PA	Jun 25th-26th
Adams County Irish Festival	Gettysburg, PA	Jul 16th
McLain Celtic Festival	Carlisle, PA	Sep 3rd
Virginia Scottish Games & Festival	The Plains, VA	Sep 3rd-4th
Edinboro Highland Games & Scottish Festival	Edinboro, PA	Sep 8th-11th
MD Renaissance Festival Celtic Celebration	Annapolis, MD	Sep 10th-11th
Celtic Classic	Bethlehem, PA	Sep 23rd-25th
Ligonier Highland Festival	Ligonier, PA	Sep 24th
Chesapeake Celtic Festival	Snow Hill, MD	Oct 1st-2nd
Central Virginia Celtic Festival & Games	Richmond, VA	Oct 22nd-23rd
Scottish Christmas Walk	Alexandria, VA	Dec 3rd

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).