

ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



SOUTHERN MARYLAND CELTIC FESTIVAL REPORT

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

At 7:30am on April 30th, the clan van arrived at the Jefferson-Patterson Park in Saint Leonard, Maryland, for the 38th annual Southern Maryland Celtic Festival. My son **Andrew, Robert Knight and I** soon had the van unloaded and gear set up at our double tent site between our Clan Kerr and Clan MacNaughton neighbors. We were ready by 8:30am for the arrival of **Evan Duncan** and **President Sam Kistler**.

It was a typical windy and cloudy Scottish day in the mid-50s with the rains holding off until after we left at 6pm. Although the games attendance was less than we hoped for, we were able to welcome some members and guests along with their families to the clan tent including **Alex Duncan, Katie (Reid) Katan, Thelma McConkey, Justin (Duncan) Norris, David Reed, Thomas Roberts, Harry Robertson, Andrew Roye, Michael (Robertson) Sanders, and Barbara (Robertson) Witzman**. The **Charles (Reed) Smylie family** joined our Society.

Evan, Sam, Andrew and I were joined by **Steve Hoffman and his friend Karen** for the official clan parade. After the parade we reconvened in the clan tent for a wonderful lunch provided in part by **Chris Lindsay** (the convener for Clan Lindsay) and his two sons. Fortunately we had roast beef available from their former herds to remind them that this year marks the 624th anniversary of the "Raid of Angus"!

At 2pm, the Knobbly Knee competition was held with 3 categories being judged by three discerning ladies. Wonder upon wonder, yours truly won the Knobbly Knees award while **Robert Knight** won the Most Scarred knees award. The Hand-somest Knees category was won by a lad from another clan. **Harry Robertson** was presented with a bottle of wine and 4 glasses to honor his emeritus status in this grueling competition.

This is a wonderful celtic festival and Sam and I believe everyone had a great time. We will be back with our double tent setup next year on April 29, 2017. Hope to see you there!

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Branch Officers

President:

Sam Kistler

Vice President:

Ron Bentz

Secretary/Treasurer:

Norman Dunkinson

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BATTLE AT TORWOOD—1460

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

In the parish of Auchtergaven in Perthshire, an infamous clan conflict took place between Robert Forrester of Torwood and our 4th chief, Robert of Strowan. The feud between them concerned some church lands at Little Dunkeld that our chief believed were his. Forrester was a nephew of the Bishop of Dunkeld cathedral and rented these particular church lands from his uncle. Robert was well known for being a scourge to the church for having previously plundered other church lands around Little Dunkeld.

In 1460, our chief was riding to Perth and met Forrester at Ardonachy near the parish church of Auchtergaven. They came to blows and Robert was deeply wounded in the head. Fortunately, after having his head wounds dressed, he was able to continue his journey to Perth. Having returned home, he later died from those wounds.

Later in 1460, our clan was called out by the King to join the siege of Roxburgh against the English. Our clan warriors led by Alexander (5th chief), just happened to take the road through Dunkeld on their way to Roxburgh and took the opportunity to plunder the lands of Torwood for provisions and avenge his father's death. Our clan seems to have escaped punishment for this deed despite the Bishop's complaints due to Alexander's fortunate marriage in April 1460 to Elizabeth Lyon, daughter of the influential 3rd Lord Glamis and recognized in a Charter under the Great Seal. Secondly, the unfortunate loss of King James II when a cannon blew up near the King during the Roxburgh siege resulting in his infant son becoming James III.

In June 2001, the founder of the Clan Forrester Society presented our Chief with a Baron-Sergeant's rod of office ('wand of peace') in Edinburgh, as we were technically still at war with them over this 1460 event. "In presenting it, the hope was expressed that the two clans would have a friendly relationship in the future." The next year at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, the Mid-Atlantic and Carolina branches marched around the field to the Forrester clan tent and shared a few drams to confirm and seal this peace treaty in the U.S.

References:

Marshall, William "Historic Scenes in Perthshire", Edinburgh, 1880, p 138.

Reid, J. Robertson "A Short History of Clan Robertson", 1933, pp 41-43.

Robertson, James "Chiefs of Clan Donnachaidh 1275-1749", 1929, pp 46-47.

COLONIAL HIGHLAND GATHERING (FAIRHILL GAMES) REPORT

By Ron Bentz

Early in the morning on May 21st, **Betty Duncan Bentz** and myself headed for the Fair Hill Colonial Highland Games. It is a very pleasant drive through scenic Lancaster County. We arrived on site at 7:15am, and were soon set up and ready to go before the heavy rain started. The rain was the literal damper on the day, varying between light and heavy all day. President **Sam Kistler** soon arrived, and we welcomed old friends and made new friends throughout the day.

The main focus at this event is on bagpipe competition, and indeed you could hear the pipes wherever you were throughout the day. There were also a few bands on hand to provide entertainment throughout the day. Among these was Albannach who are always a big draw on the Scottish festival circuit every year. I look forward to this event every year we would love to see some more clan folk at this event in 2017!

CAPTURE OF MENZIES CASTLE

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

In 1714, Queen Anne, the last Stuart monarch died. To ensure a Protestant secession, Prince George of Hanover was offered the British Crown. In August 27, 1715, the Earl of Mar raised the flag of rebellion in the highlands. Alexander Robertson of Struan (13th chief) joined Mar in Perth with 300 clansmen and was sent under orders to take Castle Campbell, some 14 miles south of Crieff and clear that area of the enemy.

The river Tay passes between Weem and Aberfeldy in the clan Menzies country. Near the end of October, a party of clansmen captured the Castle of Weem (home of the Whig Menzies chief) by a surprise attack while the garrison commander and most of his men were out drinking at a local inn. This success procured plentiful provisions that had been stored there for Argyle's army and these were delivered to Mar's army. Mar, in a letter dated October 30, noted Struan's brigade as being the strongest in the army. George Robertson of Faskally also had his own contingent of clansmen raised from his lands around Pitlochry.

Then matters turned for the worst. Mar split his army and tried to catch Argyle's army in a pincer movement. Our united clan strength of approximately 800 men was divided between the two attacking forces. The Atholl brigade which included clansmen under Captain Alexander Robertson of Drumachuine (father of our future 14th chief) entered England and ended up surrendering at Preston on November 13th. That same day at Sheriffmuir several miles north of Dunblane the armies of Mar and Argyle met. Struan and his clansmen were attacked by the right wing of Argyle's army. At one point, Struan was briefly captured by a party of dragoons but his men led by Robert Robertson of Invervack charged to the rescue and saved him. Although Argyle's left wing fled the field after being routed, his right wing held the battlefield. The next day Mar's army retreated back to Perth.

By February 1716, the Rising was over and James VIII (the Old Pretender) was back in France. Struan escaped to Holland in the summer of 1716 and rejoined the exiled royal court in France and served in the Scots Brigade until he was able to return home in 1726.



Alexander Robertson of Struan, 13th Chief of Clan Donnachaidh



Castle Menzies, at Weem

References:

Moncreiffe, Sir Iain, "The Robertsons, Clan Donnachaidh of Atholl", 1954, p 32.

Robertson, James "Chiefs of Clan Donnachaidh 1275-1749", 1929, p 58.

2007 Clan Donnachaidh Annual, pp 23-25.

ROBERTSON'S RANT

FLOWERS OF THE FOREST—DR. ROSALIE DUNCAN

By Sam Kistler

It is with great sadness that I inform our membership of the passing of Rosalie Duncan. Rosalie's passing came at 10:00am on Friday June 24th at Milly's Home in Fairfax, Virginia. She was interred at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Silver Spring, Maryland.

She was the beloved wife of Evan M. Duncan; daughter of Harry C. and Severine Langelan; sister of Chas, Martha, and David Langelan. She is also survived by three nephews. She was a member of St. Lawrence Catholic Church, the Northern Virginia Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, and was an Esquire at Lodge 758 of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

Rosalie was a very long time friend and supporter of Clan Donnachaidh to which she belonged. Rosalie and her husband Evan ran the "Donnachaidh Diner" at our tent, and at their own expense, for many years. Rosalie always made you feel like you were part of the family. She will be missed and remembered warmly!

GAMES UPDATES

By Sam Kistler

The *North Central West Virginia Games* in Bridgeport were completely rained out. I had just started my drive to Clarksburg, West Virginia, when (luckily) I received an email from our Western PA and Northern WV convener Tom Due telling me the situation. Yes, the entire city park was under about 2 feet of water! Many thanks to Tom, et al.: IOU a big one!

This year we did not have a tent at the *Mid-Maryland Celtic Festival* in Mt. Airy in May, as I was working the games and our VP and regular convener Ron Bentz was work schedule challenged. Evan Duncan came in bright and early bringing his specialty tin of short bread. Given no tent, Evan moved in with Clan Gordon. Heavy storms came in around 2pm but only lasted about an hour. Everyone who stayed had a great time.



Dr. Rosalie Duncan with husband Evan Duncan

CEUD MILE FAILTE (100,000 WELCOMES)!

We'd like to welcome the following 7 new and returning members who joined us or renewed since the last report:

Michael Knight

Carol Lucian

Carolyn Orr

Harry Robertson

Diane Smith

Charles J. Smylie

Kenneth Stiles

AFTERMATH OF NEVILLE'S CROSS

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

The battle of Neville's Cross was fought on October 17, 1346. This was a battle that should never have happened.

It all began when the English won a decisive victory at Crecy over the French in August 1346. Edward III immediately laid siege to the port city of Calais in France. Unable to break the siege, Phillip IV of France requested King David II to distract the English by mounting an invasion of northern England during what became known as the "100 Years War".

King David Bruce agreed to help and mustered an army at Perth. Duncan (1st chief) raised the clan and joined the Scottish host. The army moved into England with fire and sword until they almost reached the city of Durham. Anticipating such an alliance, Edward III had secretly gathered and stationed an army to protect his rear. West of Durham, this unknown English army was waiting for the Scots. Following standard battle practice the Scots formed three divisions with David leading the center, Robert Stewart (David's nephew and future King of Scots) leading the left and Douglas on the right flank. Eventually the Scots attacked and were pushed back. As the position grew more dangerous, Robert Stewart panicked and fled the battlefield hastening the final defeat.

David was captured after the battle and held for ransom at Odiham castle in Hampshire. He remained a prisoner for eleven years until in 1357 the 100,000 marks ransom was raised and paid. Captured along with many others at this battle were Duncan (1st chief) and his eldest son Robert (future 2nd chief). They were eventually ransomed and returned to Atholl. Duncan died around 1355 and, in 1357, Robert received a charter from King David thanking "Robert of Atholl, son of Duncan" for his honorable service. Robert also appears in the Chamberlain Rolls dated 1358 regarding taxes owed and "upon which the King is to be consulted". The problem seemed to be that Robert didn't want to be taxed the same amount as his father had paid, because his two younger brothers had inherited portions of their father's lands (Patrick received the Lude properties and Thomas received the lands of Strowan and Strathloch).

References:

Robertson, James "Chiefs of Clan Donnachaidh 1275-1749", 1929, p 42.

Robertson, James A. "The Earldom of Atholl" 1860, pp 22-24.



The Battle of Neville's Cross, from a contemporary manuscript



Robertson Clansman

**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 AND GAMES—2016

<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
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

