

# ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



## VIRGINIA SCOTTISH GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

The second half of our Games Season began on Labor Day weekend (Sept. 2-3) with the 44th annual Virginia Scottish Games & Festival held at Great Meadow in The Plains. Arriving at 7:30 AM on Saturday morning, **Robert Knight** and I again found ourselves situated beside our House of Gordon cousins at one end of a long clan row. Unfortunately, Saturday was a typical day of Scottish weather with a steady drizzle most of the day. Attendance was way down but our four stalwart lads (**Evan Duncan, Robert Knight, John Robertson** and yours truly) managed to keep everything inside the tents dry and inviting for those hardy souls who braved the weather to join us.

Our location was our usual spot about 50 feet from the entertainment tent and was an ideal site for both listening to the Celtic music coming from that tent throughout the weekend and watching the athletic competitions in the central field. This year we had two athletes competing on Sunday in the amateur competitions. Congratulations to **Charlie Kyle** and **Al Duncan** for their efforts.

We again combined our Donnachaidh Diner with the Gordon Grill and everyone in both clans were well fed. Much thanks to **Evan Duncan** for coming to help run our diner and business tents and to **Dave and Lois Todd** for again 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 we had clan parades on both days which are always fun for the clan participants and well received by the spectators. We four marched on Saturday and were joined by ten more for Sunday!

Sunday was a beautiful sunny day and many friends, visitors and clan folk came by our double tent site. We gave out over twenty applications for membership. In addition, over the course of the weekend we were visited many times by our Lindsay visitors who this year had their own clan tent! Unfortunately, their tent leaked and most of their display got wet on Saturday. Secretary **Norman Dunkinson, wife Chris and son Asher** attended, along with President **Sam Kistler** and **Harry Robertson** who

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### Branch Officers:

President:

**Sam Kistler**

Vice President:

**Ron Bentz**

Secretary/Treasurer:

**Norman Dunkinson**

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# VIRGINIA SCOTTISH GAMES REPORT (CONTINUED)

also attended the Carlisle Games in PA on Saturday!

This festival has always been well run with lots of attractions (living history, British car show, moon bounce for kids, sheepherding, etc.) for the whole family to enjoy. It is well worth attending and I hope you can come join us next Labor Day weekend.



Scenes from the Virginia Scottish Games. Clockwise from upper left: 1) Highland athlete Charlie Kyle; 2) Asher Dunkinson at the British car show; 3) Julia Robertson, unknown, Caroline Robertson, and Asher Dunkinson; 4) Highland athlete Al Duncan.



*At the Virginia Scottish Games. Left to right: Robert Knight, Harry Robertson, Sam Kistler, Jim Fargo, Asher Dunkinson, Norman Dunkinson.*

## MCLAIN CELTIC FESTIVAL REPORT

By Ron Bentz

I made my way to the grounds early in the morning for the McClain Celtic festival, always the Saturday before Labor Day. Set up in no time, I was soon joined by **Sam Kistler**, **Harry Robertson** and my mother **Betty Duncan Bentz**. The weather, however, was not the best, with several downpours throughout the day. Normally our spot offers a great view of one of the entertainment stages, but, with all the rain, everything was moved to the covered tent near the games entrance. The athletics continued despite the inclement weather, and we were able to check out some of that. It was a pretty slow day and we tore down and left early— a first for this event. I'm looking forward to better weather in 2018!



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# CLAN ESTATE NAMES

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

In previous years I have been asked by visiting clanfolk at the Celtic festivals I attend, for the derivation of the name 'struan', as in Robertson of Struan. Now is a good opportunity to cover this subject.

In Gaelic Scotland, estate names were based upon a description of the main characteristic of the land comprising that estate. Struan in Gaelic means the ridge at the confluence of two streams, in this case, the rivers Erochty and Garry where Struan Kirk is situated. On the road to Struan Kirk is the former estate of the Robertsons of Kindrochit which in Gaelic 'Ceann-drochaid' meant bridge end. The main house is situated at one end of a stone bridge over the Erochty River.

Before there were hereditary surnames, noblemen's names were originally derived from a place name and thus included the Latin (and French) prefix 'de' as part of the name itself. The name Duncan 'de Atholia', our first chief, meant he was Duncan 'of Atholl'. The lower non-landowning ranks of the clan would not generally have had a surname prior to the 15th century and would have been styled for example Robert, son of Duncan, son of Angus, etc. This was all that was necessary in the Gaelic culture to identify a person, his ancestors and his place in the community.

Below the noblemen rank were the landowning lairds of the clan community who were known by the place name of the estate where they lived. Examples are: Robertson of Auchleeks, which in Gaelic 'Achadh-leac' meant the field of flat stones; Robertson of Fearnan which in Gaelic 'Fearnna' meant a forest of Alder trees; Robertson of Lude which in Gaelic "leothad' meant land of the sloping grounds; MacInroy of Shierglass which in Gaelic 'Sgoir-glas' meant land of gray pointed rocks; Reid of Straloch, which in Gaelic "Srath-loch' meant valley of the loch or lake.

This also applied to towns and villages. The village of Kinloch Rannoch is sited at the downstream end of Loch Rannoch and Kinloch in Gaelic 'Ceann-loch' means either the head of or the end of the loch.

*Reference:*

*Robertson, James A. "Gaelic Topography of Scotland", 1869, pp 189, 346, 349, 404, 463.*



*Struan Kirk.*

## CEUD MILE FAILTE (100,000 WELCOMES)!

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

<b>Ron Bentz</b>	<b>J. Mott Robertson Jr.</b>	<b>Lauren M. Raffo</b>	<b>Jane R. Dunshie</b>
<b>Michele A. Brooks</b>	<b>Steven M. Hoffman</b>	<b>John C. Robertson</b>	<b>John W. Bullach Jr.</b>
<b>Kathy Fraser</b>	<b>Loren B. Duncan</b>	<b>Hugh H. Hughes</b>	<b>Michael W. McKenna</b>
<b>James E. Roberson</b>	<b>Douglas R. Robertson</b>	<b>Brenda S. Robertson</b>	<b>Bob H. Warren</b>
<b>Ellen S. Hansen</b>	<b>Marjorie S. Wells</b>	<b>Rexton A. Reed</b>	<b>Carolyn J. Stein</b>
<b>Thomas C. Robertson</b>			

## SCOTS HUMOR

Courtesy of Andrew Fargo

### *The Canny Witness*

During a lengthy trial in Perth, a barrister was examining an old woman named MacRoberts, and trying to persuade her to his point of view by some leading questions. After several attempts to induce her memory to recur to a particular circumstance, the barrister angrily observed "Surely you must remember this fact – surely you can call to mind such and such a circumstance." Mrs. MacRoberts answered "I ha' tauld ye I can't tell; but if ye know so much mair about it than I do, do tell the judge yerself."

## ATHOLL RANNOCH DONATIONS

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

We encourage clan members to consider making a donation to the Atholl Rannoch Society (our clan's 501 c (3) tax deductible entity) for the entire US. This year there are two projects that are located in the heart of our clan country that will need funding.

1. There is an ongoing need to raise funds for the chiefs' cemetery at Dunalastair where five clan chiefs are buried. The roots of the California redwood tree which was planted well over 120 years ago has again damaged a portion of the outer stone wall surrounding the cemetery. Any funds remaining after this year's repairs will be added to the endowment fund for the cemetery. Interest earned from the endowment fund is used for maintenance of the grounds (mowing) and other minor (tree trimming and path maintenance) costs. This site was purchased in 1995 by the Atholl Rannoch Society for the Clan Society.
2. More recently, Struan Kirk at Struan has recently been put up for sale by the Church of Scotland. While the purchase price has not yet been determined, it is estimated that it will cost about 42,000 pounds in repairs to bring the building up to current code. No decision has been made yet regarding its purchase by the Clan Society, however it has great significance to our clan and our history.

This is the church where we hold the annual Kirkin' on the Sunday morning of the Annual General Meeting. The graveyard holds the remains of Struan's father, Langton Robertson of Struan, along with many other clanfolk. Our 'Poet Chief' (13th chief) who was out in all three Jacobite rebellions (1689, 1715, 1745) was buried here in 1749. The

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### ATHOLL RANNOCH DONATIONS (CONTINUED)

current church was built in 1828 on the site of an earlier church building and is located about 100 yards from 'Tom and Tigh Mhor' (knoll of the big house), the reputed site of our first Chief's stronghold. It is located on the bluff overlooking where the River Garry and the River Errochty join.

If you are financially able to help, please be generous and make your tax deductible donation payable to the 'Atholl Rannoch Society' and send to the Branch address. Please identify which project you wish your donation to be applied. We will forward your donations directly to the Atholl Rannoch Society in California.

### ALEXANDRIA SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK — 2017

By Norman Dunkinson

The 47th annual Scottish Christmas Walk will be held in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, on Saturday, December 2nd.

Please join us to march in the parade and for our annual luncheon at the Fish Market at 105 King Street. The parade begins at 11:00am at Wolfe and South Saint Asaph streets and ends at Market Square with a massed band concert. As noted at the Campagna Center website (<http://www.campagnacenter.org/scottishwalkweekend/parade>), enjoy marching units filled with the magnificent tartans of Scottish Clans, the stirring sound of Scottish bagpipes and drums, Scottish dancers, reenactment groups, Scottie dogs, dignitaries, classic cars, Santa Claus, and much more. We hope to see you there!



*Scenes from the Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk in 2008. Above: Clan Donnachaidh forms up for the walk. Left: Ron Bentz, Norman Dunkinson, and Christine Dunkinson at the Fish Market.*



*At the former home of David Levite, Alexandria Christmas Walk 2010. Left to Right: Dr. John Lentz, Sam Kistler, Jim Fargo, Norman Dunkinson.*

## CENTRAL VIRGINIA HIGHLAND GAMES & CELTIC FESTIVAL REPORT

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

This year's Central Virginia Highland Games & Celtic Festival was held at the Richmond Raceway Complex on October 28-29. Our double clan tent space was not in our usual "ceilidh corner" spot with House of Gordon this year. We were on the opposite side of the field and it took my son **Andrew** and I awhile to locate the new site. Unfortunately we were not placed beside Clan Gordon. There were three clan tents situated between us which limited our usual four tents mingling.

Our combined Donnachaidh Diner/Gordon Grill team (not headed by master chef **Dave Todd** this year as he was sick) was again the place to come throughout the day. "**Smoky**" and **Marianne Reed** brought their awesome chili which was very much appreciated on Saturday. Thanks to everyone (from both clans!) for bringing various foods and beverages to help stock our Diner/Grill on Saturday.

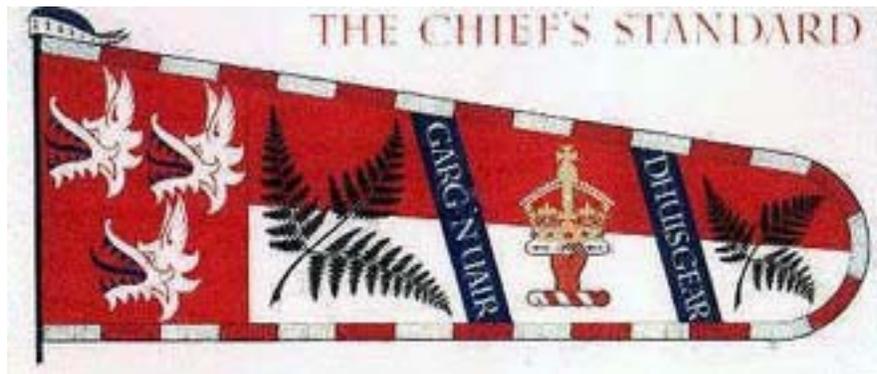
Saturday's weather was a beautiful sunny fall day. The massed bands performed at noon on the athletic field. The Diner/Grill began serving after the bands and before the clan parade at 2 PM. All the clans formed up and marched onto the athletic field and our Donnachaidh contingent of fifteen roared the clan war cry "Fierce When Roused" as we entered the field.

I was unable to return on Sunday, due to a prior commitment. Because of the Sunday weather forecast for winds and heavy rains, none of our clanfolk working the tent wanted to return to host the tent on Sunday, so we packed up everything and returned home Saturday evening. The Sunday events closed at 2 PM due to the rain and muddy fields.

We had a steady stream of potential clanfolk and visitors coming by the tent to learn about their clan history. We welcomed new members: **Carolyn (Donaghy) Stein** and **Thomas Robertson**. Several branch members also renewed: **Ellen (Robertson) Hansen**, **Rexton Reed** and **Marjorie (Robertson) Wells**.

This was the last festival of our Mid-Atlantic games season and is one of the best. Put this two day event on your calendar for October 27-28, 2018!

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## JAMESTOWN GAMES REPORT

By Tom Due

The Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival and Gathering of the Clans Took place the Last weekend of August. Clan row sits along the picturesque shore of Lake Chatauqua in Mayville, New York a mere 7 miles from the Pennsylvania border. The layout of these growing games is such that the curve of the lake puts the Band performance circle in the center of the semicircle that is Clan row. On the other side of the Gazebo is the opening parade field and site off the heavy athletics. We were greeted by many happy to see our second venture to this event. A member of another clan stopped. She has the opportunity to visit Scotland in June and thought enough to take a photo of the Clan museum sign as her bus drove past. She was tickled that we had returned so she could present us with the photo. This was only the 12th annual festival for Jamestown. The Clans are paraded onto the field during the opening ceremony and are called by name, to which our group of 8 responded with a hearty "Fierce when Roused." With around 20 clans participating, the walk of clan row can turn into a bar crawl if you're not careful. It is an event we look forward to visiting again next year!

## EDINBORO GAMES REPORT

By Tom Due

The Edinboro Highland Games and Scottish Festival was once again sponsored by Dr. Timothy Thompson and held on the campus of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania in Edinboro, Pa. The campus sits about ½ an hour from Lake Erie. My oldest son, **Tristan**, and his friends, represented the clan at the Calling of the Clans on Friday night. Having graduated between last year's games and this, he is still living about a block off campus. Due to scheduling conflicts, the rest of the family did not get to the area until late Friday night. A beautiful morning greeted us on September 9th, a sunny, albeit brisk, day. Due to **Tristan** and his friends graduating, the student contingent was considerably smaller this year than the last four. We retained a double digit Donnachaidh group marching onto the field with our battle cry, in the opening Parade of Clans. One of **Tristan's** friends put together that his mother's maiden name made him an actual member of Clan Donnachaidh! The number of visitors to the clan area seemed lower than in prior years, however the considerable comraderies between the clan groups present made for a fantastic day. Represented at the games were 12 clan groups and societies including a group from the Orthodox church with a 6 foot tall Celtic cross. This great little games is a must see!

## LINGONIER GAMES REPORT

By Tom Due

The 59th Annual Ligonier Highland games was held at Idlewild Park in Ligonier, Pa. This is western Pennsylvania's largest games. Happening the third weekend after Labor Day, this year the games fell in the middle of two weeks of performances of Jekyll and Hyde the Musical, performed by the McKeesport Little Theatre. Heather and I were in the performance, giving us a little bit of rush to leave at the end of the day. We made it and the performance went well. The only drawback to this games is its sprawling location. The clan area is off to the side of a path but is fairly centrally located at the games. That being said, the walk to any event is well rewarded. The Parade of Clans walks from the clan area past the warm up areas for many bands and most of the food vendors onto the main field of the games. With heavy athletics and dog herding demonstrations, the main field has bleacher seating as well as plenty of room for chairs around its periphery. We were graced with visits from **Sam Kistler**, **Evan Duncan** and **Harry Robertson** once more this year. Our family group included myself, **Laura**, our kids: **Tristan**, **Heather** and **Patrick**. **Tristan** had **Kelsey**, **Madjid** and **Josh**, friends from school, with him. The day was beautiful, the company grand, The shortbread... well **Evan's**, and the day a rousing success! We look forward to the trip to this, our closest games, again next year!



*At the Ligonier Highland Games. Back row, left to right: Evan Duncan, Laura Wyatt, Harry Robertson, Sam Kistler, Tom Due, Heather Due, Patrick Due; front row, left to right: Kelsie Jordan, Tristan Wyatt, Josh Davis, and Madjid Djellouli.*



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).

**CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY  
MID-ATLANTIC BRANCH**

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**The Scottish**  
If you thought the Men were tough,  
you clearly haven't met the Women!