

ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



ALEXANDRIA SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

Our last Branch event of 2017 was the Scottish Christmas Walk in Olde Town Alexandria, Virginia. This is always held on the first Saturday of December (December 2nd, 2017) and marked the start of the Christmas shopping season in Alexandria. **Andrew Fargo, Robert Knight** and I arrived at 8:00am and had breakfast with President **Sam Kistler**. Arriving at the gathering site on South Pitt Street around 10:00am, we joined **Norman** and **Asher Dunkinson** along with **Andrew Clark, Steve Duncan, Don Stark, John** and **Jennifer Robertson** with their two daughters and several others. We had a surprise clan visitor, **Mr. Jim McConaughy**, visiting from Key West and a member of our Florida Branch.



We stepped off about 11:50am after an “hour” of socializing and various flask refreshments at our assigned spot in the staging area. Leading off our clan unit were **Steve Hoffman** with our wolf head totem alongside President **Sam Kistler**. They were followed by **Evan Duncan** and **Andrew Fargo** carrying our clan flags. Many more clanfolk joined our unit as we progressed along the parade route. The entire parade route was packed with spectators this year. We practiced the clan war cry as we continued on the parade route so that as we passed the reviewing stand we were able to give a hearty “Fierce When Roused” to the honored guests. Although the temperature was a wee bit cool (mid-50s), we were fortunate to have a beautiful sunny day with no breeze.

Upon the conclusion of the parade at Market Square, most of our 25 marchers headed for the traditional Branch luncheon at the Fish Market (105 King Street). We were joined by clans MacCallum, MacNaughton, Wallace and the Scottish American Military Society (SAMS). We had a delightful lunch and social gathering in our private room. Afterwards, many of us wandered off to go shopping before heading home.

As always, it was a great day for a parade and it concluded our 2017 event season. Please consider making plans to join us and the festivities in Alexandria on December 1, 2018!

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Branch Officers:

President:

Sam Kistler

Vice President:

Ron Bentz

Secretary/Treasurer:

Norman Dunkinson

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Some of the Clan contingent at the Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk. Left to right: Evan Duncan, Andrew Fargo, Sam Kistler, Asher Dunkinson, Jim Fargo, Jim McConaughy, Don Stark, and Norman Dunkinson.

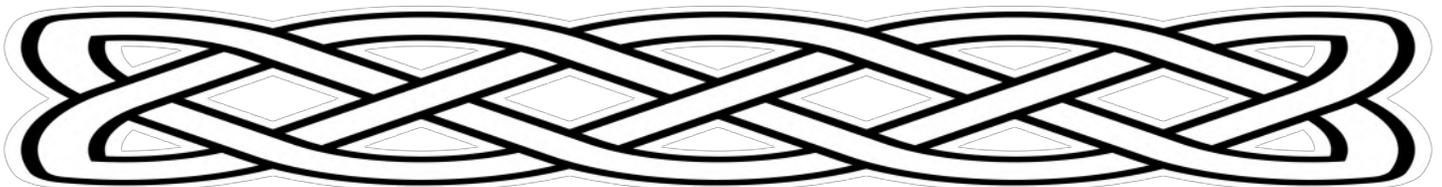
SCOTS HUMOR

Courtesy of Andrew Fargo

Audacity

“Had ye the audacity, Angus,” said a Scottish laird to his servant, “ta go and tell some people that I was a mean fellow, and no gentleman?”

“Na, na,” was the candid reply. “You’ll no catch me at the like o’ that. I keep me thoughts to meself.”



BATTLE OF DUNCRUB

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

Everyone is familiar with William Shakespeare's play "Macbeth" in which the two protagonists fight for the Scottish throne. Not so clearly known is that this rivalry began several generations before the events described in the play. Our King Duncan was not the kindly old man portrayed but lived up to what became his clan's war cry "Fierce When Roused". Macbeth, from the royal house of Moray, had a better claim to the throne on King Malcolm II death, based on celtic tanistry whereas Malcolm had adopted the English feudal system of primogeniture for his own royal line.

In 962 the kingship of Alba (Scotland) was contested between two rival branches of the MacAlpin dynasty after the death of King Malcolm I. The two princes ruled jointly until a falling out between them led to a battle upon a ridge called Duncrub (Dorsum Crup) about seven miles west of Perth in Atholl in 965. King Dub (or Duff) of Cumbria, a prince of the royal house of Alpin, was the son of King Malcolm I. Duff led an army against Prince Cuilen and his army of Moray men. It was the custom then to appoint the heir to the Scots throne, to the sub-kingship of Cumbria as the province had been given by King Edgar of England in return for homage for that province and to defend it from invading Danes.

Although Duff's army was victorious at Duncrub, Duncan, hereditary lay abbot of Duncalden (Dunkeld) and Dubdon the mormaer of Atholl were killed. At this time in Scotland's history it was common for senior churchmen to lead the armed forces of their church estates into combat. This abbot Duncan (b.920-d.965) was the father of Duncan of Atholl (b.949-d.990) who became the mormaer of Atholl upon Dubdon's death in this battle. This Duncan of Atholl became the father of Crinan (born c.976 and killed in 1045) and two younger sons. The second son, Grim (thane of Strathearn and baille of Dull) was killed in 1010 at the battle of Mortlach. The youngest son became an ancestor of the Irvine clan according to Burke's Peerage.

On King Duff's death in 967, Prince Cuilen of Moray assumed the kingship until he was killed in 971 during a battle in Lothian with the son of King Dyfnwal of Strathclyde, an ally of Duff's brother Kenneth. This brother, as King Kenneth II assumed the throne and reigned from 971-995. Kenneth finally killed Cuilen's brother Olaf in 977 ending the royal house of Moray's competition for the throne for that generation. Kenneth II was succeeded by his nephew (son of King Dub/Duff) as Kenneth III (King of Scots from 997-1005). On the death of Kenneth III, King Malcolm II (son of Kenneth II) ruled as King of Scots from 1005 to his death in 1034. Malcolm II made his grandson Duncan the King of Cumbria until he became King of the Scots upon Malcolm's death.

References:

Pinkerton, John "An Enquiry Into the History of Scotland Preceding the Reign of Malcom III, or the Year 1056" Vol. I, 1789, pp 78-99.

Wolff, Alex "From Pictland to Alba 789-1070" 2007, pp 201-202.



King Duff.

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SOUTHERN MARYLAND GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

At 8:00am on Saturday, April 28th, the clan van arrived at the Jefferson-Patterson Park in Saint Leonard, Maryland for the 40th annual Southern Maryland Celtic Festival. President **Sam Kistler**, **Robert Knight** and I soon had the van unloaded and gear set up at our double tent site between our Clan Bell and Clan Keith neighbors. We were about ready for visitors by 8:30am and the arrival of **Evan Duncan** to help convene the clan tent.

It was a beautiful sunny day with the temperature in the mid-70s. The games attendance was about what we expected, and we were able to welcome many members and guests along with their families to the clan tent including: **Alex Duncan**, **Chris Duncan**, **Kathy and Mike (Reid) Katan**, clan athlete **Charlie (Robertson) Kyle**, **Barbara (Robertson) Witzman**, **Steve Hoffman**, **Jennifer (Robson) Newbegin** and **Harry Robertson**. 100,000 welcomes to our newest branch member: **Tina (Collier) Burke** and her son **Logan**.

Evan, Sam, Barbara, Robert and I were joined by the entire **Charles (Reed) Smylie** family for the clan parade. After the parade we reconvened back in our clan tents to relax and enjoy various kinds of refreshments. **Chris Lindsay** (the convener for Clan Lindsay) and his two sons came by several times during the day and we gave and received repeated reminders (and occasional "Moos") that this year marks the 626th anniversary of the "Raid of Angus"! Our clan athlete, Charlie Kyle was on the field representing the clan in the various competitions and did well.

At 2 PM, the Knobbly Knees competition was held with 4 categories being judged by three very discerning ladies. Wonder upon wonder, I won the Handsomest Knees award while **Robert Knight** won the Most Scarred Knees award for the second year in a row.

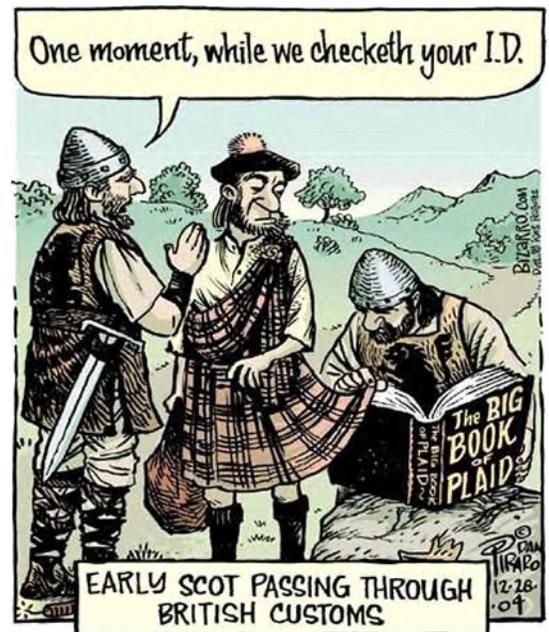
This is always a great celtic festival with many activities for the whole family ranging from watching period reenactments; listening to varied musical groups and bagpipe bands; shopping among the wide range of vendors; and listening to the fiddling competitions; and watching the highland dancing and country dancing competitions. Certainly everyone had an enjoyable day! We will be back with our double tent setup again next year on April 27, 2019, the 41st anniversary of this festival! Hope to see you there!

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:

Wilsonia Esteve
Sharon Mehl
Karen Layne
Brendan Baggitt
Tina Soares

Donald Behe
J. Mott Robertson Jr.
Brett Wilson
Harry L. Robertson Jr.





At the Southern Maryland Games. Left to right: Patrick MacRae and wife, Robert Knight, Sam Kistler, Evan Duncan, Jim Fargo, Harry Robertson.

GENEALOGICAL RAMBLINGS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

By Norman Dunkinson

No, this isn't about a Donnachaidh, and no, Ireland isn't Scotland. But most readers will know that the Scots originally came from Ireland—in fact, at one time, Ireland was known as “greater Scotia” and Scotland as “lesser Scotia.” And many of us in the USA who are of Scots ancestry know that our forebearers migrated to Ulster (Northern Ireland) before coming to America. So, in the interest of providing more genealogical articles, here goes...

A few days ago, my family and I returned from a trip to Ireland where we had the opportunity to visit the parish and townlands where my Beggs (Begg meaning “little” in Gaelic) ancestors lived. The first of the line was a James Beggs, who was born in 1752 in Carnlea townland, parish Rashee, Upper Antrim Barony, County Antrim. Not much is known of James, other than that he lived in Dunamoy townland, parish Rashee, in 1813; arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1827, with his wife Jane and his younger sons John, William, George, and Richard; and that he died on February 12, 1829, with burial at Krider's United Church of Christ Cemetery near Westminster, Carrol County, Maryland. An older son Robert (1794-1876) remained in Ireland, and Robert's son William (1824-1907), from whom I am descended, appears to have come to the US in the late 1840's.

Robert was married to Jane Waddell at the 1st Presbyterian Church in Ballyeaston, parish Ballycor, on December 8, 1819. In 1829 and 1830, Robert lived in Dunamoy. In his will written in January of 1876, he refers to himself as “of the Townland of Ballyvov [now Douglasland] and parish of Kilbride,” and bequeaths real estate consisting of his

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GENEALOGICAL RAMBLINGS IN NORTHERN IRELAND DONATIONS (CONTINUED)

“farm of land in Carnlea” and “the field called the Moiragh bog.” His death notice in the March 14, 1876, edition of the *Northern Whig* states that he died at his home in Brookfield (now Burnside), Doagh. Robert was an innkeeper, and his son, Robert Jr., continued in his father’s business.

So I set out to visit the ancestral locations that I learned of through my genealogical research. My first stop was the Kilbride Presbyterian Church in Douglasland townland. There, I found the tombstone of Robert Beggs Jr., which, interestingly, noted that he, as well as one of his sons who died young, was actually interred at a nearby cemetery called Rashee. Given that Robert Jr. died less than two years after his father, it is highly likely that Robert Sr. (my ancestor) was buried at Rashee as well. On the way to Rashee, I stopped at the Burnside Tavern in Burnside (i.e. Brookfield) and spoke with the owner and a few patrons, who were quite helpful in placing “Ballyvoy” in the vicinity of Ballybracken Road. Driving through Ballyvoy, I proceeded to the New Rashee Cemetery, where a bicyclist not only directed me to the Old Rashee Cemetery, but escorted me there on his bicycle.

Paul Richmond, in an article on the Doagh Ancestry & Townlands website (www.doaghancestry.uk) describes the Old Rashee Cemetery as follows: “Rashee Old Graveyard is a particularly humbling one to visit, perhaps more so than other, later, nineteenth-century graveyards in Ulster, as elaborately carved headstones decorated with armorial bearings stand adjacent to eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century graves which are simply marked by small boulders lifted from the surrounding fields. A number of these stones, I believe (judging from their clearly man-made, sculpted edges), are quite probably remnants of the ancient church known as Rath-Sithe, which is believed to have been estab-

lished by none other than St. Patrick himself and stood on, or near, the present site of the graveyard. The boundaries of this ancient church are known to have still been visible at Rashee in the 1860s, during which a local farmer ploughed up human remains on his land and the Rev. F. C. Young discovered Danish relics on the site of the old graveyard. It would therefore surely make sense that local farming families who were too poor to afford a headstone would indeed have used any available remaining masonry from the nearby venerable old church as a fitting Christian marker for their family graves.” The cemetery – rank with vegetation and moss-covered, fallen tombstones – contains a mort house, dated to 1831, designed to protect dead bodies until decomposition rendered them worthless to potential grave robbers.

I was not expecting to find a marker for Robert Beggs Sr., and was therefore not disappointed. A map and key of the cemetery on a plaque at the site indicated that a number of graves were unmarked and that a number of markers were illegible. It is quite possible that, as indicated in the Paul Richmond article, Robert Sr.’s grave was initially marked by a small boulder or a remnant of the masonry of the Rath-Sithe church.



Tombstone of Robert Beggs Jr. and family, Kilbride Presbyterian Church Cemetery. “Interred in Rashee” is the 3rd line from the top.

GENEALOGICAL RAMBLINGS IN NORTHERN IRELAND DONATIONS (CONTINUED)



Old Rashee Cemetery and mort house.

Likewise, I knew before my arrival in Ireland that the 1st Presbyterian Church building in Ballyeaston was of relatively recently date, and certainly not the building that Robert Sr. would have been married in, but I visited that town and church as well. The last stop on my ancestral homelands tour was Carnlea, where I was able to identify the cluster of homes and farm buildings that represented the center of Carnlea during the time (1829-1841) of the Ordnance Survey mapping of Northern Ireland. My only regret here is that I did not stop and explore this area a bit further.

While I found nothing new from a genealogical research perspective, aside from the tombstone inscription evidence that Robert Jr. – and by extension, his father, Robert Sr. – was buried in Old

Rashee Cemetery, there is nothing quite like visiting the lands where one's ancestors lived, loved, worked, and died. My advice to those traveling in Northern Ireland for genealogical purposes is brief: 1) do your research up front, as much is available on online; 2) consider (if your ancestors lived in Northern Ireland in the early to mid-1800s) obtaining the Ordnance Survey Memoirs for the counties and parishes you plan to visit, to gain an understanding of the area, its demographics, and the socio-economic condition of its inhabitants; 3) spend some time, in advance, reviewing the county, barony, parish, and townland system (there are a number of online sources where you can overlay modern maps on the Ordnance Survey maps); and 4) last, and from a very practical perspective, if you are in the country, know that opportunities to pull off the road, park your car, and take photographs are few and far between – simply find a straightaway, put your flashers on, get out of your car and do what you need to do!

Here are a few websites that I found very useful for Northern Ireland Research:

- <https://www.townlands.ie> (for parish and townland research – includes maps)
- www.osi.ie (for overlaying modern maps on historical Ordnance Survey maps)
- <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/> (essentially a census, for identifying where ancestors lived)
- https://apps.proni.gov.uk/WillsCalendar_IE/WillsSearch.aspx (for searching for Irish wills)
- <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/gro-groni-online> (for Irish birth, marriage, and death records)



Scene from Carnlea Road, Carnlea.

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DUNCAN—THIRD CHIEF

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

Not much is recorded about the life of our third chief, Duncan of Atholl. Duncan was the only son of Robert, second chief and his second wife whom Robert married in 1362. Duncan married his half-cousin, the eldest daughter of Thomas of Atholl (one of his father's younger half-brothers from his grandfather's second marriage). Thomas had been one of the leaders in the "Raid of Angus" in 1392.

Duncan had three sons: Robert, his heir; Duncan, who became the progenitor of the Robertsons of Inches near Inverness and the Robertsons of Kindeace and Glencalvie in Ross; and Thomas, of whom nothing further is recorded.

In April 1406, King James I succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, Robert III. One month earlier, King Robert III had decided that Prince James, then aged seven, would be safer in France after his older son David, had died under suspicious circumstances while in the custody of his uncle, the Duke of Albany.

Unfortunately, the young Prince was captured at sea by English pirates and turned over to King Henry IV of England. He remained a prisoner king in England for 18 years while his uncle Albany acted as governor of Scotland.

In December 1423, a treaty was signed which allowed James to be released in exchange for a large ransom. The payment of this ransom (60 thousand merks) was guaranteed by an initial 27 wealthy hostages who were sent to London. King James I returned to Scotland in March 1424 with his bride, Joan of Beaufort, and found the country in chaos.



King James I.

In 1427 King James summoned the highland chiefs to a Parliament in Perth and in an attempt to control the chaos and lawlessness in the country, arrested forty of them. Most were released and some were put to death. Our 19th century clan historians make no mention of this event involving Duncan, so he may or may not have been required to attend.

Duncan was certainly alive in 1432 when the last formal exchange of ransom hostages occurred. Duncan went to London and was detained at either the Tower of London or at one of the other royal castles. Eventually released, there is no further written record of Duncan other than his granting a charter to the Dean of Dunkeld dated January 20, 1438.

King James' nearest relatives were Malise, Earl of Strathearn (one of the hostages in London) and Walter, Earl of Atholl. They were unhappy with the King in curbing their authority and imposing law and order over their domains. Walter and Sir Robert Graham, uncle to the absent Strathearn and



King Robert III.

DUNCAN—THIRD CHIEF (CONTINUED)

Sir Robert Stewart, grandson of Atholl gathered their followers and led them to Perth. On the night of 20 February 1437, the conspirators entered the royal apartments in the Blackfriars monastery in Perth and James was murdered. James' six year old son, James II, was quickly crowned, not at Scone as his ancestors had been crowned, but in the safety of Holyrood palace while the conspirators were being pursued.

Duncan's eldest son, Robert Duncanson and John Gorme Stewart found and captured Sir Robert Graham and Sir Robert Stewart hiding near Blair Atholl. Queen Joan insured that the conspirators were publicly tortured to death in Edinburgh over a period of three days. As a reward for his part in the capture, Stewart received a cash payment. In 1451 King James II rewarded Robert Duncanson (now known as Robert 'Reoch', our fourth chief) with a crown charter which erected all his various lands into the free Barony of Struan. In addition, the chief's crest was changed from a standing wolf to a right hand supporting the imperial crown.

References:

Bingham, Caroline, *"Kings and Queens of Scotland"*, 1985, pp. 60-64.

Fry, Plantagenet and Fiona, *"The History of Scotland"*, 1982, pp. 99-100.

McLean, Fitzroy, *"A Concise History of Scotland"*, 1970, pp. 54-55.

Munro, Jean, *"Annals of the Clan"*, 1996, pp. 53-54.

Paton, Sir Noel, *"Descendants of Conan of Glenerochie"*, 1879, p. 4.

Robertson, James, *"Chiefs of Clan Donnachaidh 1275-1749"*, Perth, 1929, pp. 43-45.

Robertson, James A., *"The Earldom of Atholl"*, Edinburgh, 1860, p. 18.



Armoial bearings of Struan containing the crest of the right hand supporting the imperial crown awarded to Robert "Reoch" Duncanson, Fourth Chief of Clan Donnachaidh. The man bound by chains in the compartment is representative of the capture of the assassins of James I.



**CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY
MID-ATLANTIC BRANCH**

19354 Barrens Rd. S.
Stewartstown, PA 17363

E-mail: 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 AND GAMES—2018

<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
Colonial Highland Gathering	Fair Hill, MD	May 19 th
Garrett County Celtic Festival	Friendsville, MD	Jun 2 nd
Frederick Celtic Festival	Mt. Airy, MD	Jun 16 th
Celtic Fling & Highland Games	Manheim, PA	Jun 23 rd -24 th
Jersey Shore Piping and Drumming Classic	Toms River, NJ	Jul 14 th
Adams County Irish Festival	Gettysburg, PA	Jul 21 st
Green Hill Highland Games	Salem, VA	Aug 25 th
McLain Celtic Festival	Carlisle, PA	Sep 1 st -2 nd
Virginia Scottish Games & Festival	The Plains, VA	Sep 1 st -2 nd
Edinboro Highland Games & Scottish Festival	Edinboro, PA	Sep 8 th
Ligonier Highland Festival	Ligonier, PA	Sep 22 nd -23 rd
Celtic Classic	Bethlehem, PA	Sep 29 th -30 th
Chesapeake Celtic Festival	Snow Hill, MD	Oct 6 th -7 th
Central Virginia Celtic Festival & Games	Richmond, VA	Oct 27 th -28 th
Scottish Christmas Walk	Alexandria, VA	Dec 1 st