

ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



ANTARCTICA—CLAN CONNECTIONS

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Despite being on the opposite side of the globe from Scotland, there are many Scottish and clan connections between Antarctica and our clan's homeland. Three places in Antarctica are named after Robertson clansmen.

Between Cape Barrow and Cape Adare, where a US and New Zealand base was later established at the entrance to the Ross Sea, lies Robertson Bay named for Dr. John Robertson. This Robertson was the surgeon on the "HMS Terror", during Sir James Clark Ross's voyages of discovery in 1839-43.

Near the entrance to the Weddell Sea is situated the ice-covered Robertson Island. According to our 1958 Clan Annual, the island is named after Peterhead born Thomas Robertson (1855-1918). This Robertson was the captain of the "Scotia" during the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition of 1902-04 led by oceanographer William S. Bruce. Included in the ship's crew were Alexander Duncan and Alexander Robertson, both from Peterhead. Robertson Island is near the spot where Shackleton's "Endurance" was lost in 1915. According to multiple Wikipedia sources, Robertson Island was discovered on December 9, 1893 by Norwegian Carl A. Larsen (1860-1924) who was considered the founder of the whaling industry in Antarctica and the Larsen Ice Shelf is named after him. Larsen named the island after William Robertson, co-owner of the Hamburg Germany firm (Woltereck and Robertson) which funded his expedition.

During the warm season of 1929-30, a British, Australian and New Zealand research expedition arrived on the Antarctic continent and established a base camp along the coast. The expedition, led by Sir Douglas Mawson, had been financed by Sir MacPherson Robertson (1860-1935) and so the area was named Mac.Robertson Land in his honor. This clansman was a wealthy Melbourne Australia business man who owned Mac.Robertson, a confectionery manufacturer. He had been born in Ballarat, the son of David and Margaret Robertson of Leith in Scotland. In 1933 he donated 100,000 pounds to the state of Victoria for the establishment of the Mac.Robertson Girls High School and for other public works like the Mac.Robertson Bridge over the Yarra River in Melbourne. He received a knighthood in 1932 for his support of the Antarctic expedition and in 1935 was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire for his philanthropy.

Postscript: Regarding Robertson Island, I lean toward the 1893 honoree, although Captain Thomas Robertson actually saw the island a decade later. During the 2006-07 season, my son Andrew, under the auspices of the University of New Mexico's Institute of Mining and Technology, arrived at the American McMurdo base via New Zealand to participate in a geologic research program. I received an Antarctic "filler rock" to add to my collection of "weather" stones from the shores of Loch Rannoch.

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2020

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STRUAN KIRK APPEAL

By Jim Fargo

Membership in a clan has always carried with it a sense of historical family continuity. In the past when we all lived in the same area, every member of the clan learned to take pride in their clan's history and traditions, to uphold its standards of honor and devotion, and to pass those standards on to the next generation. No matter what their status or occupation, there was a sense of personal responsibility. If they could do little to add to the glories of the clan, they were expected to do nothing that would diminish or besmirch those standards. Though the historic clan-system has passed away, the spirit of loyalty that animates it continues to live on.

As you may have read in our Clan Annual and on our websites, funds are being raised to restore and maintain the Struan Kirk built in 1828 that was purchased last year from the Church of Scotland. Back in June 1958, the Clan Gathering was held at the home of our then Clan Council Chairman, Colonel D. Dundas Robertson of Auchleeks. That day, as reported in the 1959 Clan Annual, it is stated that "It would be fitting, he thought, if some article of church furnishing were to be presented to the Minister (Rev. Donald Cameron) and Kirk session of Blair Atholl and Struan for use in perpetuity in what the Clan regarded as its own church." It was decided that day to present the Kirk with a baptismal font which is still there. Happily, sixty years later, the Kirk is now ours!



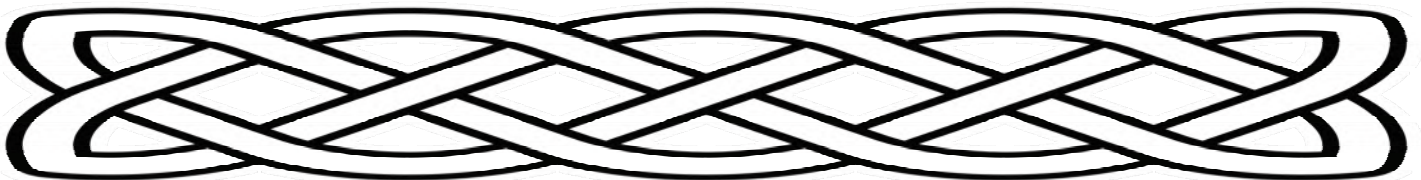
Struan Kirk.

On my various trips to Scotland and our clan country, I have visited the Kirk, along with my late mother and both of my sons. Seen from the Kirk is "Tom and Tigh Mhor" the moot hill where Duncan, our first chief, dispensed justice beside the holy site where the Erochty and Garry rivers meet.

Have you been wondering how YOU can participate and help support the maintenance of this historic Kirk that has so much meaning to members of Clan Donnachaidh? You may do so by making a tax-deductible donation to the Atholl Rannoch Society, which is an IRS 501(c3) tax-exempt organization. Your donation will be consolidated and with donations from others in the US will be forwarded to Scotland along with the names of the donors.

By consolidating donations, the Atholl Rannoch Society is able to reduce the bank fees that accrue with international donations. Your tax-deductible donation should be sent to:

Atholl Rannoch Society
4940 Park Drive
Carlsbad, CA 92008



REIGN OF KING MALCOLM IV (1153-1165)

A Continuation of the “Royal House of Dunkeld” Article Series by James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Malcolm (born 1142) came to the throne at the age of twelve, after the death of his grandfather, King David I. He never married and was known as Malcolm ‘the Maiden’.

Being a minor on the throne, there were celtic uprisings against Malcolm in Galloway, Argyll, and Moray which his Norman nobles were able to suppress. By the Treaty of Chester in 1157, Malcolm gave up Scotland’s claims to Carlisle and the earldom of Northumbria and was given in return by King Henry II the earldom of Huntingdon.

In 1160, seven earls including Malcolm, the second celtic Earl of Atholl, rebelled against King Malcolm IV and besieged him in the castle of Perth because he had accompanied King Henry II to Toulouse in the English campaigns against the French. In 1164, Malcolm (second earl) witnessed the charter of King Malcolm IV which raised Scone priory to an Abbey. Earl Malcolm had by his wife Hextilda, three sons and three daughters. Henry the eldest (born 1138) succeeded him as the third Earl of Atholl in 1198. The other sons were Duncan and Malcolm of whom nothing more is recorded.

King Malcolm died at Jedburgh in December 1165 at the age of twenty-three and was succeeded by his twenty-two year old brother William.

References:

Bingham, Caroline, “Kings and Queens of Scotland”, New York, 1976, pp. 25-26,149.

Cowan, Samuel, “Three Celtic Earldoms”, Edinburgh, 1909, pp. 11-14.

Paton, Sir Noel, “The Descendants of Conan of Glenerochie”, privately printed, 1873, p. 3.



King Malcolm IV.

CEUD MILE FAILTE (100,000 WELCOMES)!

We’d like to welcome the following 6 new and returning members who joined or renewed since the last report:

Sara Boehm Kathy Fraser Karen Layne Carol Lucian James Roberts John Robertson

SCOTS HUMOR

Courtesy of Andrew Fargo

Scottish Patriotism

A Scotsman, Robertson by name, overheard a conversation between two men in a local pub on the subject of the bravery of the Royal Navy. One of the gentlemen was expressing his surprise that Admiral Nelson had issued his signal to the fleet at Trafalgar that “England expects every man to do his duty.”

He was met with this reply from Mr. Robertson, “Ay, Nelson only said ‘expects’ of the English; he said nothing of Scotland, for he kent the Scots would ‘do’ theirs.”

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DAVID COLYEAR, KT (1656—1730)

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Our 13th chief, Alexander Robertson of Struan, raised 500 of our clansmen to join the Earl of Mar in the abortive 1715 Rising. After the battle of Sheriffmuir, he was taken prisoner and escaped by the “bold effort of his sister Margaret, who led a strong party of the Clan Donnachaidh to the rescue when he was being escorted under military escort to Edinburgh Castle.” Our “poet” chief again had to flee to France where he took service with the French army for about ten years. His sister Margaret went to London to seek her brother’s pardon from King George I in 1725 and, with the help of their relative the Earl of Portmore, gained a pardon for her brother. Who was this clansman?

David Colyear was the eldest son of Sir Alexander Robertson of Dulcaben, who left Perthshire and settled in Holland, where he adopted the name of Colyear. Alexander was created a baronet of Holland in February 1677 and died circa 1685.

Commissioned into the Army of William of Orange in 1674, young David rose to the rank of Lieutenant-General of the Scots Brigade which had been fighting in the service of the Netherlands for many years. On November 5, 1688, he led the troops ashore at Torbay when William arrived in England to take the throne on the abdication of King James II in the Glorious Revolution.

While serving in King William’s Irish campaigns against the Jacobite uprising he eventually rose to Governor of Limerick in 1691. For this service he was created Lord Portmore in June 1699. In 1702 he obtained the rank of major-general and participated in the battles of Cadiz and Vigo Bay during the War of Spanish Succession. On February 27, 1703 he received command of the Queen’s Royal Regiment of Foot. On April 13, 1703 he was raised to the dignities of Earl of Portmore, Viscount of Milsington and Lord Colyear. In 1710, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the forces in Scotland and in January 1711 was promoted to the rank of general. In 1712 he became a member of the Privy Council and made a Knight of the Thistle. In 1713 he was the governor of Gibraltar and was chosen one of the sixteen representative peers of Scotland in the House of Lords. On the domestic side, David married Catherine Sedley, Countess of Dorchester. She was the daughter of Sir Charles Sedley of Southfleet in Kent and the former mistress of King James II. They had two sons, David and Charles. Son David predeceased his father in 1729 and Charles became the second Earl of Portmore.

David Colyear was thus in an excellent position to help Margaret in her quest for an audience with King George I and supported the issuance of a pardon for her brother with the proviso that the lands were in her name only with succession to Duncan Robertson of Drumachune (14th chief) on her brother’s death. Our chief returned home in 1725 and lived quietly at his homes at Dunalastair and Struan until 1745.

References:

Robertson, James, “Chiefs of Clan Donnachaidh 1275-1749”, Perth, 1929, p.58.

Multiple Wikipedia searches.



David Colyear, 1st Earl of Portmore.

BARTHOLOMEW ROBERTS—PIRATE

By Jim Fargo

Beginning around 1500, the European countries began exploiting the riches of the New World in the Caribbean and South America. This three-way trade linked the economies of Europe, Africa and the Americas. Ships from Europe sailed to West Africa to purchase slaves to provide laborers to the colonies. These slaves were then transported across the Atlantic and sold. Agricultural products (rum, sugar, tobacco, cotton and coffee) grown on the plantations were shipped to Europe from the Caribbean along with gold and silver from the mines in South American colonies. These same ships would then repeat the cycle.

In 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht ushered in an era of peace between the European powers. The direct result was the extensive demobilization of various navies and the unemployment of large numbers of seamen. With so much wealth moving across the seas, conditions were perfect for the rise of piracy.

Port Royal, Jamaica was a central haunt for buccaneers and pirates until it was destroyed by an earthquake and tsunami in 1692. The island of Tortuga was another main base of operations.



One of the more successful pirate captains was Bartholomew ‘Black Bart’ Roberts (1682-1722) who was born in Wales. He commanded the three-masted ship “Royal Fortune” which mounted 42 guns along with several smaller vessels. Pressed into service when his own ship was captured by pirate captain Howell Davis, he was elected captain in July 1719, when Davis was killed. His crew eventually consisted of more than 500 men. Between 1719 and 1722, he captured more than 400 ships.

In 1721, Britain passed anti-piracy laws and the Royal Navy was dispatched to capture or kill pirates on sight. In February 1722, Roberts’ ship was attacked by Captain Ogle off the coast of West Africa. Roberts was killed during the battle and his crewmen threw his body overboard. More than 50 of his captured crew were hung from gallows along the coast of Cape Lopez.

Reference: Clifford, Barry and Kinkor, Kenneth, “Real Pirates”, National Geographic, 2007.

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LAST WILL OF WILLIAM REID

By Jim Fargo

It's always interesting to learn how Scottish behavior often reinforces the common concept of the miserly Scot. Here is a story about the will of a Glasgow man, William Reid, who died in September 1960.

The instructions to the executor of Mr. Reid's will were quite specific. "This may come to you as a great surprise, to be able to count the miser's hoard. This is what I want you to do: Get the case out of the cupboard with 'C.R.' on it. The key can be found in a tin with beans in it. This case contains all the things you require – policies, title deeds, insurance, record cards, etc... Collect the old case from the sideboard. There is a cash box in it. There is also a cash box at the bottom of the kitchen cupboard with a few cans on top of it. There is a pocket book between the two mattresses and another below the centre lump of coal at the back of the bunker. In the old clock on the top shelf there are a few pounds. Make sure you find everything."

The executor of Mr. Reid's estate followed the instructions and found that the estate amounted to 2,518 pounds.

Reference: Foster, Allen, "Foster's Scottish Oddities", Black & White Publishing Ltd., Edinburgh, 2010, pp. 38-39.



Clan Donnachaidh at the Scottish Christmas Walk in Alexandria, Virginia (December 2019).

PORTEUS RIOTS—1736

By James E. Fargo, FSA Scot

Maintaining peace in the city of Edinburgh was the responsibility of the City Guard. Their headquarters were on High Street near the High Kirk of Saint Giles.

In 1726, John Porteous had been appointed captain of the City Guard. Unfortunately he was a master at alienating the citizenry of Edinburgh. The animosity between the citizens and the City Guard came to a head in March 1736. Two smugglers were arrested and sentenced to death for smuggling and robbing an excise officer, James Stark, of about 200 pounds at the Pittenween Inn in Fife. Smugglers were highly regarded popular heroes at this time due to the unpopularity of paying excise taxes to Britain. These two heroes, George Robertson and Andrew Wilson, were especially well thought of because of their repeated unsuccessful attempts to escape from the Tolbooth prison.

Three days before their planned execution, they were taken to the Tolbooth church to attend their own funeral service. Just as the service was beginning, Robertson broke free from his guard and escaped the packed church. The congregation blocked the guard's path and Wilson grabbed hold of his guard to prevent pursuit. Robertson was free!

On the day scheduled for Wilson's execution at the Grassmarket, the City Guard was out in full force as Captain Porteous was expecting an attempt by the citizens to free Wilson. The Edinburgh authorities decided to have a detachment of soldiers from the castle on standby in case of trouble. At the Grassmarket, unrest broke out among the crowd gathered to witness the hanging. Captain Porteous ordered his men to fire their muskets into the crowd to break up the demonstration. The following riot ended with six people dead and many wounded. Porteous was arrested and put on trial for these murders.

In July, Porteous was found guilty and sentenced to be executed. Several days before the planned hanging, a stay of execution came from London. A mob of infuriated citizens stormed the Tolbooth prison on the Royal Mile. Captain Porteous was dragged from his prison cell and lynched by the Edinburgh mob the night before his scheduled release. The British government imposed a series of punitive measures on Edinburgh in retribution for the citizens taking the law into their own hands.

Postscript: For further reading, Sir Walter Scott's classic novel, 'The Heart of Midlothian', describes these events. Nothing more is known about George Robertson, but as he was in the smuggling trade, he might have been able to escape to the continent. He might also have returned to Atholl and the safety of his clan-folk. I do wonder if the robbery could have been an inside job, as excise officer James Stark was also a clansman.

References: Multiple Wikipedia searches.



The Porteus Mob, oil painting by James Drummond.



**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—2020 (1ST HALF OF GAMES SEASON)

<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
Sedalia Center Celtic Festival*	Big Island, VA	Mar 28th
Southern Maryland Celtic Festival*	St. Leonard, MD	Apr 25th
Garrett County Celtic Festival	Friendsville, MD	Jun 6th
Chesapeake Celtic Festival	Berlin, MD	Jun 6th-7th
Cumberland Valley Scottish Games*	Shippensburg, PA	Jun 13th
Celtic Fling & Highland Games	Manheim, PA	Jun 27th-28th
Jersey Shore Piping and Drumming Classic	Toms River, NJ	Jul TBD
Celtic Weekend	Manheim, PA	Aug 22nd-23rd
Green Hill Highland Games*	Salem, VA	Aug 29th

Clan Tent at Games marked with an () asterisk