

# ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



## VIRGINIA SCOTTISH GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo

The second half of our Games Season began with the 39<sup>th</sup> annual Virginia Scottish Games at Great Meadow in The Plains on Labor Day weekend. Arriving at 8:00am on Saturday morning, we were situated between our House of Gordon cousins and the Games' hospitality building. Saturday started with a light shower, but cleared up and turned out to be a beautiful day. Fortunately, Sunday was a repeat of Saturday's weather and we avoided hurricane/tropical storm Isaac weather.

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 for **Dave and Lois (Robertson) Todd** for hosting the Gordon Grill.

Our location along the top of the ridge running through the clan tent area (36 clans) provided an ideal site for listening to the Celtic music coming from the Entertainment tent.

The Scottish Fiddling tent was located over by the Highland Dancing area near the main entrance,

about as far from our location as possible, but I did get over there both days to check on the performances. I'm pleased to report that **Peter Walker** won our clan's 2<sup>nd</sup> place open "Ronald Duncan Gonnella Memorial" trophy this year.

Lots of friends and visitors came by the clan tent each day. Although we had a Lindsay tartan skirt on display, not a single Lindsay visitor came to the tent. Our signage did attract all of our own clan folk and we now have four new members of the Society:

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Branch Officers:

President:

Sam Kistler

Vice President:

Ron Bentz

Secretary/Treasurer:

Norman Dunkinson

## THE BLACK WATCH COMES TO VIRGINIA

By Jim Fargo

The Black Watch and the Band of the Scots Guards are coming to Manassas, Virginia on Sunday January 27, 2013. The pageantry of Scottish military tradition comes to life when these two esteemed military bands take the stage at 4PM in the Hylton Performing Arts Center located on

the Prince William campus of George Mason University. The pipes and drums of the Black Watch will join the 40-member Scots Guards orchestra and highland dancers and fill the center with rousing marches, stirring anthems and the distinctive sounds of bagpipes and brass.

For more information visit the Black Watch event page at Hylton-Center.org. You can order tickets, either by calling 888-945-2468 or by going online to: Hylton-Center.org.

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## ROBERTSON'S RANT

### MCHENRY GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo

At 7:00am on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, the clan van rolled into the fairgrounds of Garrett County, Maryland. A quick conference between President **Sam Kistler**, my son **Andrew**, and I at the clan tent area soon had the van moving over to the indoor vendor pavilion where we set up our tent. We were set up and ready by 7:30am for the start of the 25th annual McHenry

Highland Festival. About half of the attending clans set up in the indoor vendor pavilion rather than deal with the cold breezy winds and threat of afternoon rains. The only drawbacks to being indoors were that we didn't get to watch the athletics or hear the bagpipe bands.

In addition to the arrival of several regular attendees (**Harry Robertson**, and **David McCrobie**

**Strattan, Sr. and Jr.**), we welcomed several Robison and Reid families to our indoor tent.

Five clansmen marched in the parade of tartans. We joined the other clans by the outdoor clan tent area and eventually formed up in a line near the reviewing stand prior to the bands parading onto the field. We then marched past the review-

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*Donnachaidh Coat of Arms*

### FAIR HILL GAMES REPORT

By Norman Dunkinson

The Colonial Highland Gathering, informally known as the Fair Hill Highland Games, opened for the 52<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year on the morning of Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. Though I've convened there for about 15 years, I was unable to set-up in the morning due to just getting back from a work trip to Arizona a few hours before, and my father, **Norman G. Dunkinson III**, graciously accepted the responsibility for erecting the tent and displays.

When I arrived around 12:30pm, **Sam Kistler**, our President, and members **Harry Robertson** and **Smitty Woodward** were already on site. Sam, Harry, and Smitty

were just returning from representing Donnachaidh in the Parade of Clans. It was a hot day, but that didn't deter the festival goers – in fact, due to arriving late and parking in the public area, I got a better appreciation than I've ever had for just how well this game is attended.

Consequently, business picked up a good bit in the afternoon, as we welcomed a number of prospective members and friends of the Clan to the tent, and assisted many who were searching for their Clan affiliation.

More than 25 Clans and Societies were in attendance, including Cameron, Paisley, Sinclair,

Guthrie, Irwin, MacLeod, MacDougall, Nisbet, MacGregor, Bell, Grant, O'Brien, MacAlister, Donald, Hay, Wallace, Maclaren, Buchanan, Kennedy, Gordon, MacPherson, Graham, and Lindsay.

We had our usual fun with Clan Lindsay, of course, with my father reiving a stuffed cow from the slumbering Lindsay convener. The cow already had a sign on it that said something to the effect of "protect me or the Donnachaidhs will get me," and get it we did. It was proudly displayed on our table until the Lindsays realized the theft and recruited a youngster to come, dirk in hand, to demand the return of the cow!

## MCHENRY GAMES REPORT (CONTINUED)

ing stand and gave a rousing “MOO” to the honorary clan Chieftain for the day, **Mr. Gregan Crawford** (of Clan Lindsay!). The clans then formed up behind the reviewing stand for the parade of dog breeds, massed band performance, and customary speeches. After the parade we returned to the indoor clan area and set up the Donnachaidh Diner for lunch.

I always enjoy chatting with our clan folk and with non-Donnachaidh visitors to the tent to help determine which clan(s) they might be eligible to join. Gregan Crawford was a vendor several spots away from our site and we would never have known he was a Lindsay except his wife and daughter Lindsay were visitors to our tent. Being allowed inside was a great opportunity as everyone eventually visits the vendor shops and we thus see and talk to many more folks than if we had been outside. This is a great smaller festival held on the first Saturday of June each year. Hope to see you next year!

## VIRGINIA SCOTTISH GAMES REPORT (CONTINUED)

we welcome **Heather Gange** from Baltimore, MD; **Roy Greenia** from Falls Church, VA; **Tony LaCava** from Bristow, VA; and **Thomas Reed** from Winchester, VA as members of the Mid-Atlantic Branch!

This festival has always been well run with lots of attractions (living history, British Car show, moon bounce for kids, sheepherding, etc.) that the whole family can enjoy. It is well worth attending and I hope you can include this festival in your 2013 calendar.

## MCLAIN GAMES REPORT

By Ron Bentz

I arrived at the site to find the tent was already in place. Good work, **Norman and Sam!** This is one of the smaller games we do, always held on the Saturday prior to Labor Day. The weather was perfect. In the past we've had to deal with rain from hurricanes, so it was great to have such a fine day. The main entertainment was provided by the Martin family band, who have become a staple of this event. This talented family plays Scottish and Irish tunes, along with dancing.

Norman, Sam and I welcomed several folks to

the tent throughout the day, including **Dave and Roz Strunk**, my mother **Betty Bentz**, and the newest Donnachaidh - my son **Liam James**. Clan attendance was down compared to prior years, but included the McLain stalwarts – Cameron, Donald, Hay, MacAlister, MacDuff, Mackintosh, MacLachlan, Maclaren, Murray, and Wallace. There was some talk at the end of the day on how to gain more interest in this event. All agreed that allowing beer would be a great start! Nonetheless, it was a very enjoyable day!

*“...and the newest Donnachaidh—my son Liam James.”*



*Aldclune Brooch*

## ROBERTSON'S RANT

### CRINAN, ABBOTT OF DUNKELD

By Jim Fargo

We know from our clan history books, that from Crinan's marriage to Bethoc, daughter of Malcolm II, the "Ard Righ" or high king of Alba, their son Duncan was born in 1007. Later for political alliance reasons, King Malcolm II had Bethoc divorce Crinan and remarried her to earl Sigurd II of Orkney. The child of that marriage was earl Thorfinn II of Orkney (1009-1065). On earl Sigurd's death in 1014, she was married a third time to earl Finlaech of Moray. These marriage alliances had been necessary for King Malcolm to hold safe Caithness and Orkney on his kingdom's northern frontier. An old man of 80 without sons, King Malcolm had acquired for his grandson Duncan the kingdom of Cumbria on his southern border with England.

In 1027, King Canute of England and Denmark summoned King Malcolm II and his grandson prince Duncan to do homage for the kingdom of Cumbria. Cumbria had been added to Alba after Malcolm won the battle of Carham in 1018. The meeting was held in the earldom of Mercia at the port city of Chester. King Canute of England was proposing a treaty of peace between the two countries. As part of the proposal King Malcolm II was asked to allow lord Crinan (his daughter's first husband), to return to Alba and that the abbacy of Dunkeld, vested in

him on behalf of Malcolm's daughter Bethoc, should not be granted away on her recent death, but that lord Crinan should continue to enjoy its rights and its privileges together with the duty to protect and foster this abbey for life. On that condition, in addition to others, he offered peace.

King Malcolm was being asked by King Canute to take back into Alba, one of England's great moneyers. Crinan was a merchant and mintmaster with license to strike coins in London as well as in York. He had houses in both York and Shrewsbury.

Even though Crinan was the father of Duncan, his interests and acumen had led him to England and more lucrative pursuits after the divorce. The stewardship of the monastery of Dunkeld had never been denied him, nor a fair amount of its revenues. But to be formally installed in such a monastery at the head of the great waterway of the Tay, the lord abbot of Dunkeld would hold for King Canute a base in the center of Alba from which all Alba might be controlled. Malcolm reluctantly agreed to the proposal with the proviso that Crinan could keep no more than 200 men-at-arms at Dunkeld. As the secular leader (mormaer) of Atholl, Crinan could also call up the manpower of Atholl if needed.

The object of establishing lord Crinan back in Dunkeld was less one of strategy than one of trade. Dunkeld was like York and London, at

the head of a tidal estuary, and under Crinan enjoyed a considerable trade with the merchants of Norway and Denmark and elsewhere in the Baltic.

Gillacomghain, mormaer of Moray was a business partner of Crinan. To better control the trade with Norway, they decided to replace Thorfinn as earl of Caithness with Crinan's sister's son Maddan. Crinan supplied the 20 ship fleet to carry Gillacomghain's Moray army through an agreement with his son Maldred's uncle in York. After the defeat of the fleet, Thorfinn anchored his own fleet near Thurso and marched his men to Thurso for a night attack on the sleeping army of Moray. Both Gillacomghain and Crinan's nephew Maddan were killed. As Thorfinn was the heir of his uncle Finlaech, the previous mormaer of Moray, he spared the remaining Moray men and took their oaths of loyalty to him as the new mormaer of Moray. Thorfinn was now earl of Moray, Caithness and joint earl of Orkney. He then married Gillacomghain's widow, 16 year old Ingebjorg/Groa, in 1031 which legalized the marriage alliance created for the proper consolidation of his properties.

Lord Crinan bore no grudge for the death of his sister's son Maddan. He sent his eldest son, Duncan, prince of Cumbria, to Thorfinn's wedding in 1031 with a 400 man escort. Duncan pre-

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## CRINAN, ABBOTT OF DUNKELD (CONTINUED)

sented his half sister Wullfflaed's new husband Lord Forne at the wedding. She was Crinan's daughter from his second marriage. Their first child, a son named Crinan, was born in the fall of 1034. Duncan's half brother from Crinan's second marriage was named Maldred.

King Malcolm II died at Glamis castle on November 25, 1034 in the 30<sup>th</sup> year of his reign. His nominated successor was Duncan Mac Crinan, his eldest grandson, who was duly elected High King at Scone in December 1034. Duncan was 33 years old and his election placed the House of Atholl firmly in power. Unfortunately, Duncan's record as a military leader was poor as he began a two front war on his northern and southern frontiers at the same time. Taking advantage of disputes over the English succession, Duncan attacked Northumbria and was defeated at Durham castle in 1039. Duncan then combined his two armies and confronted Thorfinn in August 14, 1040, only to be defeated and killed at Bothgowan near Elgin. Macbeth and his Moray forces had helped defeat Duncan and the result of

the alliance was that in the summer of 1040, Macbeth was crowned High King at Scone and reigned in relative peace for almost fifteen years. Macbeth lost the kingdom of Cumbria to earl Siward of Northumbria who was Duncan's brother-in-law.

Crinan, on the death of his son King Duncan, began plotting with his English allies to gather support for his 10 year old grandson's claim to the Scottish throne. For eight years, young Malcolm lived under King Edward's protection as a guest in the English court. Malcolm's younger brother, Donald Bane was fostered to Ireland and the youngest brother Maelmuir remained in Dunkeld.

At the turn of the year 1045, Crinan began to remove what goods he still possessed in Cumbria and transport them, bit by bit to the monastery of Dunkeld and his storehouses there. As mormaer of Atholl and warrior abbot of Dunkeld, Crinan was both the secular and spiritual leader of Atholl. Crinan's plan was to raise a rebellion against Macbeth using Dunkeld as his base. It

was on one such trip, in the spring of 1045 that he disembarked with his goods and some of his men at the riverside. The silence at the monastery should have warned him. The absence of his own men-at-arms there and on the pathway up to his hall finally did. Crinan, his son Maldred and all 180 of his men-at-arms were trapped and killed and the planned rebellion was crushed.

Duncan's youngest son, Maelmuir, was captured and sent in fosterage to Ireland. Lord Forne, husband of Crinan's daughter had remained in Nottingham and escaped death.

Thorfinn was able to recover Duncan's youngest son Maelmuir from Ireland and restored him to the care of the new mormaer of Atholl, Cormac, at Dunkeld.

Although Crinan didn't succeed in 1045, his grandson Malcolm was eventually crowned as High King on April 25, 1058. The descendants of Crinan remained on the throne until the death of King Alexander III in 1286.

Article based on:

"Macbeth" from Heroes and Warriors Series by Bob Stewart, 1988.

"King Hereafter" by Dorothy Dunnett, 1982.

"History of Scotland" by J.D. Mackie, 1978.





*Alexander Robertson of Strowan, the  
Poet Chief*

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## UPCOMING CELTIC EVENTS AND GAMES—2012

Celtic Classic Festival	Bethlehem, PA	September 28th—30th
Virginia Celtic Gathering***	Lanexa, VA	October 5th—6th
Chesapeake Celtic Festival	Snow Hill, MD	October 6th—7th
Radford Highlanders Festival***	Radford, VA	October 13th
Scottish Christmas Walk+++	Alexandria, VA	December 1st

\*\*\* Clan Donnachaidh Tent  
+++ Clan Donnachaidh Luncheon

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.  
Mid-Atlantic Branch membership dues are \$20.00 per year.

