

ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



BRANCH UPDATE

By Norman Dunkinson

Happy new year and greetings to our members, both old and new! I have a number of items on which to report as we enter 2013:

T-Shirts

T-Shirts are back, for the first time in years! Our stock includes blue, red, and grey t-shirts of various designs. The bulk of our shirt stock has "Clan Donnachaidh" printed on the front left breast, with a horizontal sword beneath, and the back of the shirt has "Clan Donnachaidh," with 3 wolf heads beneath, and "Fierce When Roused" beneath the wolf heads. T-shirts will retail for \$15.00 and will be available at all Games that the Branch attends. While I will take orders via email and mail t-shirts to members, members are encouraged to purchase shirts at the Games in order to save shipping

costs.

Membership Dues

Dues will remain unchanged for 2013. Branch membership dues are \$20.00 annually and Parent Society dues are \$25.00 annually. Note that the Parent Society now offers a Family membership for 2 people living at the same address for \$35.00. Note, as well, that Parent Society dues are scheduled to increase in 2014.

Membership Periods and the Clan Annual

Annual Branch membership begins and is tracked from the date of payment, and members may join or renew at any time throughout the course of the calendar year. The Parent Society, however, does not maintain a "perpetual" membership system, at least with regard to distribution of the Clan Annual. For a Parent Society member who renews annually to receive

the Clan Annual, they must renew between January 1st and July 31st (Parent Society memberships are technically due on January 1, 2013, for 2013).

Unfortunately, this sometimes results in a situation where a member who renews their Parent Society membership outside of the January 1st to July 31st time period does not, or is told they will not, receive the Clan Annual. I successfully argued for members in this position last year, and have already sent a reminder email to the appropriate person at the Parent Society this year in an attempt to insure that all those who are members at the time of Clan Annual printing/publication (based on a perpetual membership system) do, in fact, receive one.

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JANUARY 2013

Branch Officers:

President:

Sam Kistler

Vice President:

Ron Bentz

Secretary/Treasurer:

Norman Dunkinson

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BRANCH UPDATE (CONTINUED)

Current Member Renewals March 2013

I've also been asked to provide information relative to current member renewal.

Rather than listing those individuals who are past due, listed below are those current members (i.e.

those who have paid within the last 12 months), sorted by next renewal month. If your name is not listed,

your annual Branch dues are past due:

Bob Land

April 2013

Marion M. Caskie

May 2013

Jeffrey T. Robertson

Betty Bentz

Harry L. Robertson

Wendell S. Woodland

Robert H. Warren

June 2013

Bruce M. Robison

September 2013

Tom Reed

Heather E. Gange

Roy C. Greenia

Anthony J. LaCava

Dana G. Bongesan

Carolyn R. Orr

Thomas J. Due

October 2013

Erin M. Bierwirth

Jonathan L. Holley

Jonathan E. Reid

Jolene Reed

Rexton A. Reed

Thomas E. Haynes

Thomas H. Johnson

Curtis W. Reed

Andrew Clark

Morris Gordon

Joyce A. Mundy

Lou Ann Reid

November 2013

Kevin S. Webb

December 2013

Donald E. Behe

January 2014

Norman Dunkinson

Ron Bentz

WILIAMSBURG GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo

On October 6th, the clan van arrived at the Rockahock Campground in Lanexa VA just barely before the 9AM cutoff for unloading our gear by the tent space. President **Sam Kistler**, son **Andrew** and I soon had the van unloaded and we were soon ready for the start of the 35th annual Williamsburg Games. **Robert Knight** and **Dave Lightowler** came with us from Luray. This year we were situated on the end of a row beside House of Gordon in the "ceilidh corner". House of Gordon convener **Dave Todd** provided a hot breakfast for our clans while we got organized for the day.

With a beautiful sunny day in the mid-70s, the crowds were there and the late afternoon threat of rain did not dampen the festivities. We had four clansmen march in the parade of tartans and we

shouted the clan war cry "Fierce When Roused" as we passed the reviewing stand and saluted the honored clan - Colquhoun. As soon as the parade was over, the Donnachaidh Diner was in operation alongside the Gordon Grill and there was plenty of food and beverages for everyone. Many thanks to those who brought additional supplies. Along with the arrival of many regulars and first timers, we welcomed one new member, **Erin Bierwirth**, to our Clan Society.

There were ten teams for this year's Ladies Haggis Hurling competition. We fielded two teams. The House of Gordon also had two teams and last year's winners, Clan Shaw fielded four teams. The results were: House of Gordon team 2 won first prize (186 feet!), Donnachaidh team 1, led by **Laura** and her Reid "sisters", won second

place (179 feet!) and Clan Shaw took third place. Our team 2 was led by **Erin Bierwirth** and I'm sure they were close to coming in fourth.

Rockahock Campground is an excellent location along Route 64 between Richmond and Williamsburg and the Games staff really does a good job. There are lots of events during the day ranging from children's athletic games and sheep herding demonstrations to fiddling and harp demonstrations. The music pavilion, vendors and the highland athletics were quite a ways from the clan tent area, but worth the long walk. This is definitely not an event to miss, so we will be back again next year. See you there!

RADFORD GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo

On October 13th, the clan van arrived at the campus of Radford University for their 17th annual festival. President **Sam Kistler**, son **Andrew** and I soon had the van unloaded at the tent site. We were set up and ready by 9AM for the start of the 17th annual Radford Highlanders Festival on Moffett Field. We were joined later by **Robert Knight** and **Dave Lightowler** from Luray. This year we were situated at the end of the clan row next to Clan Douglas. This allowed us to have an open space on one side available to host our bagpiper clan folk and their gear.

Along with the arrival of our clan pipers (**Sonny Bishop** and **Ripley Williams**) from the Virginia Highlands Pipes and Drums, we welcomed athletic judge **Dave** and scorekeeper **Roz Strunk** from Pittsburgh and many other visitors this year. New members joining the Society were: **Jonathan (Robertson) Holley** of Ferrum, VA; **Jolene Reed** of Bristol, VA and **Jonathan Reid** of Blacksburg, VA.

We had four clan folk march in the parade of clans. We formed up alphabetically in the clan tent area and followed the Virginia Highlands Pipes and Drums onto the athletic field, past the reviewing stand and lined up with the other clans for the massed band performance. We soon returned to the tent to set up the Donnachaidh Diner for lunch.

Throughout the day, we were able to assist many Radford students in determining which clans they were descendant from and which societies they are eligible to join. It was a great sunny (mid-70s) day in a great setting and thankfully it was not on the same day as the Williamsburg festival this year. We look forward to being there again in 2013.

RICHMOND GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo

The Richmond Highland Games & Celtic Festival was held this year at the Richmond Raceway Complex (formerly the VA state fairgrounds) on October 20-21. **Bob Land** joined President **Sam Kistler**, my son **Andrew** and I as conveners. Our clan tent was in its usual "ceilidh corner" spot with House of Gordon two tents away. Our combined Donnachaidh Diner/Gordon Grill team headed by master chef **Dave Todd** was where to be throughout the festival. Much thanks to **Smokey** and **Marianne Reed** (for their trays of delicious fried chicken) and everyone else from both House of Gordon and Donnachaidh who brought food and beverages to help stock the Diner/Grill on Saturday and Sunday. My only regret was that there was no parade of clans scheduled for Saturday and despite my best efforts to arrange an impromptu one, I was unsuccessful. Hopefully there will be clan parades on both days next year. The Bonnie Knees contest was held around 2 PM and although the only Donnachaidh in the 30-man competition, I did make it into the top 5 selectees. Clan Campbell won with House of Gordon coming in second.

Returning bright and early on Sunday morning, we shared breakfast with the House of Gordon and prepared for another busy day. Sunday was unusual in that we had a completely different group of clan visitors from Saturday. The clan parade was at noon and the clans followed the massed bands onto the athletic field where we roared the clan war cry as we passed the announcer. After the parade, the Diner/Grill reopened and was as busy as Saturday. Later in the day I was successful in having a second parade around the clan area consisting of us and the House of Gordon led by **Ian**, a Clan Donald piper.

We welcome four new members, **Andrew Clark**, **Thomas Johnson**, **Curtis Reed** and **Lou Anne Reid**, who joined our Clan Society during this two day festival. My thanks to **Stokes McEwan** for all of his efforts to organize and host this festival after the loss of last year's Doswell games site due to foreclosure and sale earlier this year. Put this event on your calendar for next year!!!

ROBERTSON'S RANT

CLAN DNA PROJECT—A PERSONAL STORY

By Ron Bentz

The Clan DNA project is administered by familyreedna.com. After many years of considering sending a sample, this spring I did so. The sample must be given by a person with a clan surname. If you are like me and are a Donnachaidh through your mother, then you must get a sample from a male relative – in my case, my maternal (Duncan) uncle.

You can test from 12 up to 111 markers. 12 will give you the most general of your matches. The higher the number you test, the better idea you get of your close matches. I'm now up to 67 markers. The next would be 111. It is suggested that, if you wish find true relatives, to go with at least 37, which is where I started. The sample is very easy to get. They send you a kit in the mail, then you rub swabs on the inside of the mouth, drop the swabs in the mail, and await your results. If you're like me, you check the website every day, even though you will be sent an email when your results post.

So what did I find out? I was grouped in m222. This was discovered several years ago. At first it was suggested that people with these markers were all from the famous Irish King Niall of the Nine Hostages. That is no longer thought to be true, though some with these markers likely are. The m222 project, to

which I belong, consider it northern Irish/southern Scotland. At this time, they can't determine if it started in Ireland or Scotland. From a Clan perspective, Crinan, the father of King Duncan, was lay abbot of Dunkeld, and was therefore likely of the kindred of St. Columba. And Columba was kin to Niall.

At twelve markers, most of my matches were indeed from Ireland. However, once you get up to 37 markers and higher, you find your true matches. At 67 markers, I have close matches with three Duncan's. The first has the family line back to 1691 in East Lothian, Scotland. The markers came back 25/25, 36/37, and 64/67. They have something called the tip calculator; using this gives you an idea of when you and your matches shared a common ancestor. For this match, at twelve generations back, they say there's an 83% chance we share a common ancestor. The numbers gets higher the further you go back: at twenty generations, it's 99%. Each marker has a different value when considering the match. There's another Duncan I'm at 63/67 with, but for this match at twelve generations it's 89% we have a common ancestor, and at sixteen generations it's 98%. Lastly, there's another Duncan I match with. This match also goes back to East Lothian. This match is 61/67. At twelve generations, this match is 74%. I have matches with other surnames as well at 67 markers. Most of these are found in southwest Scotland.

It should be noted that, if you send a sample, you are at the mercy of whoever else sent samples. It is possible you won't have close matches.

To say I'm pleased with my results would be an understatement. I'd given up on finding my link to Scotland, as I couldn't make the paper trail back. But now with modern science, I've been able to find my genetic link to Scotland. Anyone who sends a sample and would like to compare to mine, I'm in Duncan subgroup E genetically linked to Scotland. I would encourage all to send a sample if you can. The more samples collected, the more links will be found with our cousins in Scotland, and how we are connected.



VP Ron Bentz at the Scottish Christmas Walk in Alexandria, Virginia in 2008

CEUD MILE FAILTE (100,000 WELCOMES)!

We'd like to welcome the following new members who joined us during the second half of the 2012 Games season:

Heather Gange
Erin Bierwirth
Andrew Clark
Thomas Due

Roy Greenia
Jonathan Holley
Thomas Johnson
Morris Gordon

Tony LaCava
Jolene Reed
Curtis Reed
Kevin Webb

Thomas Reed
Jonathan Reid
Lou Anne Reid

We hope to see you back at the Games in 2013!

PHOTOS AND WEBMASTER NEEDED!

We need Games photos for future editions of the *Rant*! Please submit your photos electronically to Norman Dunkinson at: ngdiv@verizon.net.

We also still need a webmaster to actively manage www.robertson.org. If you, or someone you know, is interested, please contact Norman at: ngdiv@verizon.net.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

By Norman Dunkinson

In preparing this edition of the *Rant*, I decided to take a trip down memory lane and peruse past issues, beginning with the first I ever received after becoming a new member—volume 12, issue 2, published in March of 1994 (actually, I didn't join until I attended the McHenry Games in June of 1994, but Jim Fargo was kind enough to send me the last published issue!).

While publishing technology has come a long way since those days, these were great issues, and I remember anxiously looking forward to the next. Authors of articles were unidentified until the November 1996 issue, which is a testament to Jim's modesty as editor, as these early issues contained some great historical articles that were obviously written by him.

In any case, I plan to feature some nuggets from these past issues going forward. To start, here is the "The Lantern," from the June 1998 issue, submitted by Chip White:

In the Highlands of Scotland, Mr. Duncan's wife went into labor in the middle of the night, and the doctor was called out to assist in the delivery. To keep the nervous father-to-be busy, the doctor handed him a lantern and said, "here, you hold this high so I can see what I'm doing." Soon, a wee baby boy was brought into the world. "Whoa there Scotty!" said the doctor. "Don't be in a rush to put the lantern down...I think there's yet another wee one to come." Sure enough, within minutes he had delivered a bonnie lass. "No, no, don't be in a great hurry to be putting down that lantern, lad...it seems there's yet another one besides!" cried the doctor. The Scot scratched his head in bewilderment, and asked the doctor: "Do ye think it's the light that's attractin' them?"

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CHRISTMAS WALK REPORT

By Jim Fargo

Our last clan event of 2012 was the Scottish Christmas Walk in Olde Town Alexandria, Virginia, which is always held on the first Saturday of December. Since we no longer have a gathering site for the pre-parade party (Dave Levite now lives in South Carolina), we arrived at our assigned spot in the parade by 10 AM after dropping off some gifts with Branch President Sam Kistler for "Toys for Tots" at the local Starbucks. President Sam was helping at the collection site.

Leading off our clan unit was Steve Hoffman carrying our wolf head totem and Andrew Fargo with the clan banner. President Sam and VP Ron Bentz were immediately behind them. We stepped off about 11:30 AM and we quickly warmed up as we continued along the parade route practicing the clan war cry. As we passed the reviewing stand, we gave a hearty "Fierce When Roused" to the honored guests. Upon the conclusion of the parade at Market Square, our 20 plus marchers headed for the traditional clan luncheon at the Fish Market Inn (105 King Street). We were joined by clan Wallace and had a delicious lunch. Even though the weather was cool and cloudy, it was a great day for a parade!



The wolf head totem at the Christmas Walk

THE MEN OF LORNE IN RANNOCH

By Jim Fargo

In June 1306, shortly after his crowning on March 27th at Scone, King Robert Bruce was defeated at the Battle of Methven by the Earl of Pembroke, the English Governor of Perth. It had been a surprise attack in the woodlands and was a serious defeat for Scotland. Bruce headed west with the survivors of his army and sought refuge in the Perthshire hills. It would be some years before Perth saw him again.

A mile or so down Strathfillan lies 'Dail Righ' or Dalry, the King's field and it was here that Robert the Bruce almost met his death after he had fled from Methven. Bruce was attacked in this low lying strip of land by a formidable band of MacDougall and MacNab clansmen led by the celebrated John MacDougall of Lorne. The MacDougall chief was the maternal uncle of the Red Comyn, who had been a claimant for the Scottish throne. Lorne owed Bruce a blood vengeance for Bruce's sacrilegious murder of John 'Red' Comyn, the Lord of Badenoch, in church at Dumfries in February

THE MEN OF LORNE IN RANNOCH (CONTINUED)

1306. One of the men of Lorne caught hold of Bruce's plaid in the melee and despite a deadly wound kept dragging Bruce back toward his attackers with such force that Bruce could only free himself by releasing his plaid. His plaid brooch went with it and remains a trophy in MacDougall hands. It is now preserved at Dunollie Castle in Argyllshire by the descendants of those same MacDougalls of Lorne. Bruce and his remaining men managed to escape this ambush and took refuge for a while in Glen Falloch and in a cave near Inversnaid in what is now MacGregor country.

Fortunately, Bruce found a strong friend in Rannoch. Long centuries have now passed since Donnachadh Reamhar sent around the Fiery Cross or `crois taraidh' to gather his clansmen for Bruce at Fea Choire, `the assembly place'. This site is a secluded glen connecting Rannoch with Glenerochty and was the central rallying place for the defense of the clan territory. Twice the MacDougalls and their allies came into Rannoch to find and kill Bruce and twice our clansmen was mustered to defeat them.

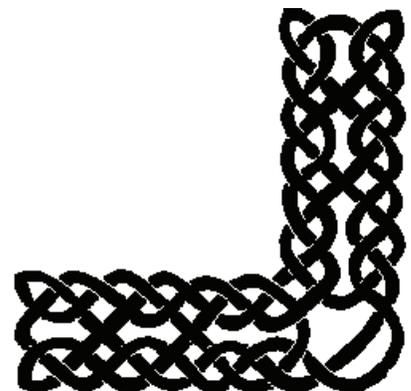
The first invasion was from the south so Duncan deployed his forces to meet the MacDougall invaders at the point where the glen emerges into the flat lands at the east end of Loch Rannoch. Although details of the Battle of Innerhadden are not clear, it was definitely a victory for the supporters of Bruce since the place names associated with this battle are still well known. Innerhadden was the name given to the place where the battle started. Dalchosnie means the `Field of Victory' and that name commemorates the battlefield site. Glen Sassunn or `Glen of the English' is the glen where the MacDougall's English allies fled and the name of the site of the victory beacon, Lassintullich, are all still in use today.

Shortly after this defeat, the MacDougalls and their MacNab allies again threatened. This time they approached from the northwest and camped within two miles of Loch Rannoch. Scouts reported their presence but `Stout' Duncan decided to determine for himself the strength of the foe before he committed his forces.

Disguised as a beggar or travelling man, he was able to enter and wander about the MacDougall camp. Unfortunately, his great stature gave him away and he had to take to his heels with the enemy chasing after him. Having outdistanced all but one of his pursuers, `Stout' Duncan turned back and slew him. This allowed his other pursuers time to catch up. According to tradition, the remaining MacDougalls soon had Duncan trapped at the River Ericht where he made a prodigious standing leap of 16 feet and was able to clear the river and escape. This rocky site is still called Leum Donnachadh Reamhar or "Stout Duncan's Leap".

Based on the information he learned during his visit, the surprise attack early the following morning was totally successful. Not only were the surviving men of Lorne scattered over the wasteland of the Rannoch Moor but their leader, Alexander MacDougall, was captured. Duncan placed his prisoner in the island fortress known as the "Isle of the Gulls" at the western end of Loch Rannoch. He remained in this island fortress until he tricked his captors and managed to escape in his jailor's boat.

This second defeat ended MacDougall incursions into Rannoch and `Stout' Duncan didn't meet up with them again until 1314 when the clan was mustered at Fea Choire a third time to join Bruce at Bannockburn.





Jim Fargo—FSA Scot, Past President, Secretary/Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, and All-Around Member—at –Large!

**CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY
MID-ATLANTIC BRANCH**

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UPCOMING CELTIC EVENTS AND GAMES—2013

Lexington Scots-Irish Heritage Festival	Lexington, VA	April 13 th
Southern Maryland Celtic Festival	St. Leonard, MD	April 27 th
Frederick Celtic Festival*	Frederick, MD	May 11 th
<i>*Honored Clan: Clan Donnachaidh</i>		
Colonial Highland Gathering	Fair Hill, MD	May 18 th
McHenry Highland Festival	McHenry, MD	June 1 st
Bonnie Brae Scottish Festival	Liberty Corner, NJ	June 1 st
Grandfather Mountain Highland Games	Linville, NC	July 12 th -14 th



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).