

ROBERTSON'S RANT

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



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 3

NOVEMBER 2016

VIRGINIA SCOTTISH GAMES AND FESTIVAL REPORT

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

The Fall half of our Games Season began with the 43rd annual Virginia Scottish Games & Festival at Great Meadow in The Plains on Labor Day weekend (Sept. 3-4). Arriving at 8 AM on Saturday morning, we again found ourselves situated beside our House of Gordon cousins at the end of a clan row. Both days were not the typical early September (hot and humid) weather but more late Fall with a great breeze both days. Our location was about 50 feet from the entertainment tent and was an ideal site for listening to the Celtic music coming from that tent throughout the weekend and for watching the athletic competitions.

The recent passing of **Rosalie Duncan** cast a pall over the entire weekend as Evan's wife really operated our Diner with limited help from myself and others. We combined our limited 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 participants and well received by the spectators.

Lots of friends, visitors and clan folk came by our double tent site each day. We gave out thirty applications for membership. In addition, over the course of the weekend we were visited by three Lindsay visitors who joined us for lunch. I hope they have a Clan Lindsay tent here next year so they can help feed us! Unfortunately, President Sam Kistler was unable to attend either the Carlisle Games in PA on Saturday or us on Sunday due to health issues. He was missed!

This festival has always been well run with lots of attractions (living history, British car show, moon bounce for kids, shepherding, etc.) for the whole family to enjoy. It is well worth attending and I hope you can come join us and include this festival in your 2017 calendar.

Branch Officers

President:

Sam Kistler

Vice President:

Ron Bentz

Secretary/Treasurer:

Norman Dunkinson

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ATHOLL RANNOCH SOCIETY DONATIONS

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

As we approach the end of 2016, we encourage clan members to consider making a donation to the Atholl Rannoch Society (our clan's 501 c (3) tax deductible entity).

This coming year we need to initiate repairs to a portion of the outer wall of 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 damaged the wall. Any funds left over from this year's donations will be added to the endowment fund for the cemetery. Interest from the endowment fund is used for maintenance of the grounds (mowing), repainting the wrought iron railing and other minor repair costs. If you are able, please be generous and make your tax deductible donation check payable to the 'Atholl Rannoch Society' and send to the Branch address. Thanks in advance.



The Clan Donnachaidh Tent at the Ligonier Highland Games. Front Row (L to R): Harry Robertson, Asher Dunkinson; Second Row (L to R): Evan Duncan, Heather Due, Patrick Due, Laura Wyatt, Tom Due; Third Row, in shadow (L to R): Norman Dunkinson IV, Norman Dunkinson III, Tristan Wyatt. Photo by Christine Dunkinson.

THE BATTLES OF DUPPLIN MOOR AND HALIDON HILL

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

In 1332 during an English-Scots uneasy peace, Edward Balliol with the support of King Edward III of England sailed with 88 ships and landed in Fife to reclaim the Scottish throne his father had abdicated in 1296. By sailing to Fife, he bypassed the Scottish defenders stationed along the border. Marching to Perth, Balliol won a decisive victory at Dupplin Moor over the Earl of Mar (a nephew of Robert the Bruce and Regent of Scotland for Bruce's son) on August 11, 1332. This battle demonstrated the effectiveness of the English longbow against the traditional Scottish long spears and Scots losses were heavy. It was reported that Scottish bodies were piled to the height of a 15 foot spear while English losses were light. With Mar dead, Balliol had himself crowned at Scone several weeks later. Dupplin Moor was the first battle in what became known as the second Scottish War of Independence.

Sir Archibald Douglas, the newly appointed Regent and guardian of the eight year old King David II (son of Robert the Bruce), led a surprise attack on Balliol's camp near the end of that year and swept Balliol from the country "with one leg booted and the other bare'.

The puppet-king returned in March 1333 with King Edward III leading an English army and laid siege to the border town of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Berwick's defenders had agreed to surrender unless they were relieved by July 20, 1333. Sir Archibald Douglas raised an army to relieve the siege. Edward III established the English army in three divisions upon Halidon Hill, a 600 foot high summit about two miles southwest of Berwick. This was the perfect vantage point which gave command over all approaches to Berwick. The only means of attack for the Scots was to work their way through swampy ground before clambering up the hillside. As the Scottish spearmen attempted this, the English archers again riddled the Scots with arrows. By the end of that black day, July 19th, Sir Archibald, six earls, seventy barons, five hundred knights and an unknown number of spearmen were dead, while English dead numbered fourteen. Berwick surrendered the next day.

Both battles were fought by Scottish spearmen trained to fight in schiltron formations. While the earl of Atholl, Sir John Campbell died at Berwick, fortunately Duncan of Atholl (our 1st chief) did not bring our clansmen (not being trained to fight in this fashion) to participate in either battle.

Balliol rode north to Perth and declared himself king once more. King David II fled to safety in France as the guest of King Phillip VI. Edward III returned to England and turned his attention toward France and thus began the Hundred Years War. David II didn't return to Scotland until 1341 after the final flight of Edward Balliol in 1336.

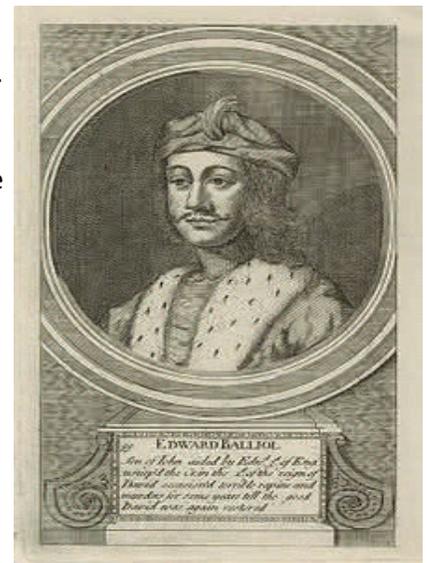
References:

Cowan, Samuel "Three Celtic Earldoms", 1909, p

Robertson, J.A. "Earldom of Atholl", 1860, p 19.



King David II of Scotland



Edward Balliol

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RADFORD HIGHLANDERS FESTIVAL GAMES REPORT

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

On Saturday October 8th, the clan van should have arrived at Bisset Park in the City of Radford VA for the 21st annual Radford Highlanders Festival. This year we were to be situated at the end of the clan row to allow us to have an open space to host our bagpiper clan folk and their gear.

Unfortunately, your convener had a series of disasters earlier in the week and so I had called and cancelled our planned attendance on Friday afternoon. Imagine my surprise when I left the house on Saturday morning and discovered a flat right rear tire which would have probably blown on Interstate 81 had I left at 5AM as planned. The trip was not meant to be.

Fortunately, our clan piper **Ripley Williams** from the Virginia Highlands Pipes and Drums and the Games' athletic judge, our own **Dave Strunk and his wife Roz** from Pittsburgh were there to represent the clan.

I really enjoy this festival as it is in a great setting. However, I would like to see it move back to Moffet Field on the Radford University campus. I miss the opportunity to assist Radford students in determining which clans they are descendant and which clan societies they could be eligible to join. I look forward to being there in person in 2017.

ANGUS BULL STATUE REDEDICATION

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

On September 27, I traveled to the Meadow Event Park, home of the Virginia State Fairgrounds in Doswell, VA to attend the official rededication of the historic Angus Bull statue by the Virginia Angus Association. I was invited to attend by a member of that Association who knows of our clan's link to cattle "lifting" in Scotland and my own ancestral link to the establishment of the Aberdeen-Angus breed. My friend **Robert Knight** of Clan MacNaughten came with me from Luray. We were joined there by bagpiper **Doug Campbell** to represent the kilted Scottish connection.

The preliminary activities were held in the southern-style mansion, Meadow Hall, and the statue is located to the right of the entrance to the mansion. After the ceremony, the attendees followed the piper to gather outside by the statue. The statue had been covered earlier in the day with a red Robertson tartan blanket. After some introductory remarks, the tartan blanket was removed so everyone could see the statue. The statue had been cast in 1957 and in 2015 the Association acquired it for this new permanent home.

Of course, our clan connection relates back to the famous "Raid of Angus" in 1392 and our subsequent "lifting" of cattle from neighbors near and far. On that raid we were taking ownership of indigenous hornless and short horn cattle native to the Clan Lindsay area and not highland cattle. While the Aberdeen and Angus breeds were known in the 16th century, it was not until the mid 1800s that the stock had been improved through crossing and re-crossing their strains by various breeders that we get the black and red Angus cattle we recognize today.

My ancestral connection to the breed goes back to my great, great grandfather on my mother's side of the family. George Milne (1824-1898) was the blacksmith on the Tillyfour estate. George and his wife Beatrice had nine children, of whom their daughter Isobel (1852-1938) (my great grandmother) was the oldest of three daughters. William McCombie, the owner of Tillyfour, is regarded as one of the great improvers of the black Angus breed of polled (hornless) cattle. At Tillyfour the master breeder molded the best of the original strains (Angus and Buchan) into one improved breed with superior characteristics to either of the originals. McCombie's most famous steer "Black Prince" won the Birmingham and Smithfield Shows in 1867 and he took the steer to Windsor Castle for the personal inspection of Queen Victoria. She was so impressed with this breed that several years later she visited the Tillyfour estate on her way to Balmoral Castle.

If you have the opportunity to visit the Meadow Event Park in Doswell, please take the time to look at this new addition to the grounds. This estate was also the home of Secretariat, the 1973 Triple Crown winner.

CEUD MILE FAILTE (100,000 WELCOMES)!

We'd like to welcome the following 8 new and returning members who joined us or renewed since the last report:

Betty Bentz

Randall Duncan

Ellen Hansen

Sharon Mehl

Rexton Reed

John C. Robertson

Zachary Robertson

Marjorie Wells

ALEXANDRIA SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS WALK

By Norman Dunkinson

The 46th annual Scottish Christmas Walk will be held in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, on **Saturday, December 3rd**.

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. 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!



Jim Fargo at the Angus Bull Statue



The Angus Bull Statue Unveiled

ROBERTSON'S RANT

CENTRAL VIRGINIA HIGHLAND GAMES & CELTIC FESTIVAL REPORT

By Jim Fargo, FSA Scot

The Central Virginia Highland Games & Celtic Festival was held this year at the Richmond Raceway Complex on October 22-23. Our clan tent space was in our usual "ceilidh corner" spot with House of Gordon's two tents right next door. Our combined Donnachaidh Diner/Gordon Grill team (headed by master chef **Dave Todd**) was the place to be throughout the festival. "**Smoky**" and **Marianne Reed** brought their awesome chili which was very much appreciated. Many thanks to everyone (from both clans!) for bringing food and beverages to help stock the Diner/Grill on both Saturday and Sunday.

Saturday's weather was a beautiful cold sunny fall day with major gusts of wind throughout the day. The massed bands performed at noon on the athletic field. The Diner/Grill began serving before the clan parade this year as the parade was not until 2 PM. The clans formed up and marched onto the athletic field and our Donnachaidh contingent of five roared the clan war cry as we passed the announcer.

At 1PM a large contingent from both clans participated in the Bonnie Knees competition on the athletic field. Yours truly displayed my knees to the four very discerning judges and won 1st place in the over 60 age group. Prospective new member **Jerod Reed** won 2nd place (under 21 age category) in his first ever competition.

I was unable to return on Sunday, due to prior commitments. However, **President Sam** more than filled in. Our clanfolk shared breakfast with the House of Gordon and prepared for a less breezy sunny day. At 9 AM, the "Flowers of the Forest" service was held and Rosalie Duncan's name was among those honored.

We had a steady stream of clanfolk and visitors both days coming by to learn about their clan history. We welcomed the following new and renewal members to our Branch: **Randall M. Duncan, Ellen (Robertson) Hansen, Rexton Reed, Zachary D. Robertson, and Marjorie (Robertson) Wells.**

My thanks to **Robert Knight** of Clan MacNaughton for hauling my tent gear back home to Luray on Sunday evening. This was the last festival of our Mid-Atlantic games season and is one of the best. Put this event on your calendar for next year!!!

BLAST FROM THE PAST

This bit of humor, called "Scotsman on a Deserted Island," was featured in the February 1997 edition of *Robertson's Rant* (Sara Robertson, Editor). It has been edited slightly to fit in the space allotted.

For ten years an old Scotsman had been on stranded on a deserted island, with only coconuts and fish for food. One morning he was looking out over the water when a beautiful woman rose up out of the water wearing scuba gear.

Awestruck, the Scotsman looked at the woman who asked him how long he'd been on the island. When he replied, the woman's face softened; she said, "I'll bet you really could go for a cigarette." "Aye! Aye! I could use a cigarette!" She unzipped a pocket on her sleeve and pulled out a pack of cigarettes and matches. After a long drag, he thanked her.

"I bet you'd really like a drink, too," the woman continued. The Scotsman was ecstatic. "Aye! I could use a drink!" So the woman pulled out of her other sleeve a small bottle of single malt and handed it to him. The Scotsman downed the bottle and looked back at the woman, thanking her.

"You've been on this island for ten years," the woman began again, "I bet you've never been away from your favorite pastime for that long a time before," she said, slowly unzipping the front of her wetsuit. "Och aye!" the Scotsman cried, "don't tell me ye've got a set of golf clubs in there, too!"

SHEET MUSIC FOR “LOCH RANNOCH”

Jim Fargo had a piper come into his store recently. Apparently Jim treated him to a wee dram and was rewarded with the piper’s rendition of “Loch Rannoch.” The piper later provided the sheet music, below, for the benefit of all clan pipers.

Loch Rannoch SLOW AIR John Wilson

FLOWERS OF THE FOREST

We are grieved to learn of the passing of Francis Duncan, father of Evan Duncan, who passed away on November 18th from Alzheimers at age 94.

THE BRITISH NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

By Norman Dunkinson

A wealth of information can be found in old newspapers to lend color and context to the otherwise dry facts and figures of genealogical research. Here’s an interesting article from the December 7, 1829, edition of the *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, that sheds light on an event that may have precipitated the emigration of my Dunkinson ancestor, Robert (1814-1869), from the Isle of Wight, England:

“During the night of Wednesday, the shop of Messrs. G. and T. Lewis, butchers, situate within the Butter Market, was broken into, and a quantity of copper coin carried away: on the following morning, a boy of the name of Stevens having purchased a pair of shoes, and tendered the price in halfpence, suspicion was caused from this circumstance that he had not come honestly by the means, although the seller was not then aware of the above robbery. This gave rise to enquiry, and the issue was, that this boy, together with his brother, and two others of the name of Dunkinson (also brothers), have been apprehended on suspicion of committing the offence.”

The brothers Dunkinson were Robert, aged about 15, and his brother Edward, aged about 14, who are listed as being indicted for felonies at the January 19, 1830, Epiphany Sessions. Fortunately, there was no prosecution. Robert immigrated to the United States, at the age of about 17, on the ship *Cambria*, arriving in New York, NY, on June 20, 1831.

I accessed this article through the **British Newspaper Archive** (<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>). This site has a number of Scottish, Irish, and English newspapers, offers a free trial, and a 12 month subscription for only £6.67 per month.

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JAMESTOWN REGIONAL CELTIC FESTIVAL

By Tom Due

On Saturday August 27th, we invaded the Northeast Branch territory with an excursion to Mayville, New York. The day was blessed with bright sunshine, warm temperatures and a constant breeze making the clan tents quite pleasant!

With over 40 clans listed, the attendance of 31 seemed to disappoint some but was close to filling the venue with comfortable spacing. Unfortunately one of the failed-to-show clans was Lindsay, so Mooooooing was kept to a minimum!

Venturing into the vendor row, and away from the lake edge, proved to be a sweltering venture and the eclectic collection of Celtic and mainstream vendors was interesting. The "We are Scots and we don't do the keep calm crap" T-shirts seemed to be a favorite, as many sported them around the games.

Several times during the day the "Chautauqua Bell" steam-powered paddlewheel ship sounded its horn as it passed the gathering. Even more frequently we were bathed in the aroma of kettle corn from the booth directly behind us. Just beyond the kettle corn was the smoker cooking chickens all day long. Needless to say, everyone in the tent was always hungry. The fare at the fair was more than adequate to suffice.

We had several clansmen interested in joining the Clan Society. For most, that meant leaving with an application in hand for the Northeast Branch; however, being less than 15 miles from the Pennsylvania border as the crow flies, we did sign up one new member.

About an hour into the day, we were approached by the first of many saying "we were told you are the people to talk to if you need information." With that, the constant flow of inquisitors began. I spent a great deal of the day, including taking a brake part way through a wonderful fish and fries meal, answering questions while my daughter **Heather** fielded her own share. Her green fingers were her badge of honor as official stamper. Instead of a passport, the kids toted a map of Scotland for the clans to stamp. The area left open for us to stamp was at the easternmost edge of the Duncan land, half in the North Sea.

The calling of the clans was done during opening ceremonies at 1:00pm. The massed band was formed through the calling of the bands to the field. Then the clans were led in by a solo piper to form a line across the entirety of the field. Our clan representation of 6 members was an honorable showing and one of the larger. Each clan name was read and when ours was, we responded, with raised sword, "Fierce," "When Roused."

During closing ceremonies they held a Flowers of the Forest that again had the massed band, but this time only one member of each clan, with a sword. We marched out, swords on our shoulders with a piper escort forming a semicircle around two swords in the ground symbolizing the two called home. A small group of pipers started Amazing Grace to be joined by the entire massed band. At the final stanza, we were called to the ready. As the solo piper played the final run-through, we in synchronicity slowly lowered our swords and bowed our heads as the swords came to rest on the grass. After the concluding note of the solo piper we paraded off in silence.



Piper Allison Duncan at the Edinboro Games. Photo by Sarah Schroeder.

EDINBORO UNIVERSITY HIGHLAND GAMES

By Tom Due

The Edinboro games for 2016 opened with Clan Donnachaidh as the honored clan! As we were the honored clan this year, we made the journey to campus on Friday night for the calling of the clans! **Allison Duncan**, Clan Piper for the Northeastern Branch, piped the clans across a footbridge, over a small knoll, and into the circle of the gathered. The clan representatives circled the timber stacked in a tee pee shaped pile waiting to take light from the torches the representatives each carried. As the names of the clans were called we each responded and placed our torch onto the soon-to-be bonfire. As I shoved the torch into the pile, our group of about 10 clan members and friends responded to my call of "Fierce" with "When Roused!"

The fire burned for close to an hour with the clans interacting, Allison piping, and finally a band taking the nearby stage. I am not sure how far into the night this went as the ride back to our camp called us shortly thereafter.

A Beautiful September morning the first weekend after Labor Day, welcomed us to the campus of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. The weather continued to bless our day at the games with fair skies and warm temperatures.

The clans set up under a huge tent again this year. We shared a portion of the tent with the beer tasting table. An extreme burden I assure you! The clans number over a dozen, with several new representatives this year.

Our clan tent was once again the most attended, as our son and his girlfriend are still attending the university. We spent the day answering questions of the games patrons and students wandering through; some specific to a clan, some about the sword on the table, and some about the heavy athletics going on right in front of us.

The day ended all too soon. We left the games tired but happy and look forward to the games next year. We look forward to many members coming to show support at the 2017 games!

LIGONIER HIGHLAND GAMES

By Tom Due

This year's Ligonier Highland Games at Idlewild Park in Ligonier, PA, was again the fourth weekend of September instead of the third, causing it to coincide with a number of other events this year including Celticfest. Recently, it is held the third week after Labor Day. If Labor Day is late as it was this year, then there is disarray in the universe! Or at least in the Scottish games circles.

Due to a number of circumstances, our usual parade of clansmen was somewhat sparse. We were blessed with visits from **Harry Robertson**, **Evan Duncan** and even an unexpected visit from **Sam Kistler**. A surprise was **Norman Dunkinson** and his family arriving at the tent.

Our son and three of his fellow students made the journey from Edinboro University of PA, giving us a full clan tent before any of our visitors arrived. Two of the girls, **Aura** and **Kesley**, spent time at the fiber to fabric tent helping with weaving for the children. We were able to set up tables in the area between our tent and our neighbors making the most of every inch of the allotted space, even if there was not quite enough room for both canopies this year.

There was fair attendance, about a dozen members, in the clan parade. In classic Fargo fashion, we interrupted the speaker with 'Fierce When Roused' yelled as we passed the stage!

Due to the number of visitors to the tent, I spent more time visiting than normal. Fortunately, **Heather Due** picked up on my duties of answering questions from passersby and stamping the kids' passports. A pleasant day was had by all. Plans for next year to have a little more room are already in the works with Clan Henderson and Cameron. The business of the day even interrupted the traditional sharing of sprits with the Henderson crew.

We look forward to even more members and clansmen visiting next year!



Asher Dunkinson at the Ligonier Games. Photo by Christine Dunkinson

**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).

LOOSE PARTS

BY DAVE BLAZEK

