

# Touch Not – Magazine of the Clan Chattan Association

## Chairmans' Message 2024

David Mackintosh



David Mackintosh

**W**elcome to the 2024 edition of Touch Not, I hope the year ahead proves to be a good one for you and yours.

This magazine plays a central role in the Clan Chattan Association (CCA), allowing us to share news, not just of our own activities but also of our constituent clans and members. One of the highlights is of course the 2023 Gathering, where we celebrated our 90th anniversary. I think everyone who joined us at the Kingsmill Hotel will agree that the venue was a great success, and the celebration cake was excellent. You will see some highlights captured by the camera elsewhere in the magazine. The weather was also kind to us at Moy. The CCA tent was kept busy, and we were blessed with some excellent piping from not only the CCA's official piper, Cindi McIntosh Misch, but also Craig McIntosh personal piper to the CCA's President, John Mackintosh of Mackintosh. My thanks are due to all those who made the Gathering, and events surrounding it, such a success. A huge amount of effort is expanded by a small team to the great benefit of us all.

Which brings me to my key message. Please consider how you might contribute to the running and development of the Association. We are very fortunate in that we have an active core of people who contribute to Council and make things happen. Due to the efforts of current and former Treasurer's we have a solid financial foundation. Having just celebrated our 90th year we are, inevitably, looking to the next major milestone and thinking about how we develop the Association for the future.

While we have a good membership there is great scope to reach out to many more people with a connection to Clan Chattan. Our shared history is unique and central to the story of Scotland. Exciting work is underway to improve our website and make it a powerful resource for all those with an interest in the Clan Chattan collectively, our constituent clans or the role they have played in the history of the Highlands, Scotland, and beyond.

We are also looking at how we can better support the activities of our constituent clan associations as well as other organisations involved in promoting the culture of the Scottish Highlands. The scope is tremendous. But to realise these ambitions we need members to come forward and offer up some of their time and skills. The time commitment need not be onerous, the range of skills which would help are broad. If you have skills in administration, event organisation, minute takings, social media, copy writing, event organisation, marketing, researching, to name just a few (!) please do get in touch (the Association email can be found on the inside of the back page). Help and guidance would be provided, and Council members are a kindly bunch and rarely bite!

Despite the jovial tone this is a serious and important request. The CCA has great potential, it has many assets and has benefited from outstanding work and effort by some key individuals, but we need to broaden the base which delivers our activities. We need you, or maybe someone you know, to join us in helping deliver a CCA that serves and supports all those with a love and interest in our great confederation of Clans. The Clan Chattan Association Coat of Arms motto is Comhla Nas Laidire, which translates to Together Stronger. The importance of cooperation is clearly evidenced in our shared past. Our successful future is dependent upon new individuals coming together and helping us deliver our aspirations and events. Don't dither or delay, get in touch!

Which of course leads me to the 2024 Gathering, I hope many of you will already have 1 August in your diaries and I look forward to seeing you for our AGM, Dinner, and the fun to be had at Moy.

Take care and best wishes.

**David Mackintosh**



## Cover Story

### Inverness Castle

**T**he castle sits on a cliff overlooking the river Ness and the city. There has been a succession of castles on this site since 1057. The present structures of red sandstone and displaying a castellated style dates back to 1836.

The main part, at the southern end, incorporated the County Buildings which included the Sherriff Court and at the northern end was the prison. When the council offices moved to new headquarters in 1963 the castle remained as the sheriff court buildings.

Due to planned extensive renovations and remodelling the castle and grounds closed to the public in 2021. The site is now scheduled to reopen in 2025 as the all new Inverness Castle Experience.



Inverness Castle

## Presidents Message



The Mackintosh family

**W**hat a great August we had to celebrate our milestone. 90 Years Young. Fearless, fresh and forward thinking. Our wildcat has considerable spirit, driving us on. Guided, of course, by our

members and the council. Our comfortable and cheery gathering was a warm celebration of all the association has tried to achieve over the years. And it was great that we had a lot of members there who have given us so much over so many years, as well as the young who will be the lifeblood of the Association in the future. Not to mention the many other friendly faces in between! A wonderful band of friends with a common interest and purpose, which the atmosphere over those days and the happy photos bear testament to.

The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there, it was written.

And I have mountains of evidence to show that. And looking at some of it I have to admit I'm rather relieved it's in the past. I spent much of the autumn months raking through the attic and study at Moy Hall. Letters in faded envelopes, often never really intended for other eyes. Ceramic wrapped in straw, designed for tables and dinners long gone. Dusty old relatives photographed, sometimes drawn, in poses and attire that would actually probably be celebrated in today's fashion magazines. Not to mention the sometimes grisly accounts of settling scores, and the past hardships of day to day living. A mixed bag.

But of course, what we have the pleasure, the privilege of doing, is to rake through that past and make it relevant for us and those who share our interests and passions. Unearthing gems and having the chance to contextualise them. Preserving and shining a light on our ancient past and progress, so that we and others can make greater sense of our origins and make it a part of something meaningful and special.

It may have been different, but it need not be so foreign. After all, parts of that past course through our veins. Distant cousins, there's an unlimited supply. And we are glad to have the opportunity to meet so many through our strong connections. A flourishing family. And we are always grateful that there are also many who are working hard to bring our association up to date. Showing the way clearly with their vision and ingenuity, helping clansfolk today and in the future. And I'm sure those dusty old relatives would be impressed too.

So here's to you all, members and council alike. Thanks for all you contribute on our continued path along the road to discovery and friendship. And I hope to see many of you during the year.

**John Mackintosh**

## Dunkirk Monument to Ewen Macpherson of Cluny 1706-1764

**E**wen Macpherson of Cluny, the Chief of the Macphersons, was a fugitive in the Highlands for nine years, following the battle of Culloden. He was one of those responsible for distributing the 'Jacobite Gold' [aka The Loch Arkaig Treasurer] and in 1755 Prince Charles Edward asked him to come to France, to account to him for the remaining funds. Cluny made a dangerous journey through London to France, only to find that the prince was in Basel, where in the event the Prince gave him the cold shoulder. Ewen settled in Dunkirk, with his wife [a daughter of Lord Lovat of the '45] and died there in 1764.

It is known that, being refused interment in a Catholic graveyard, he was buried in the garden of the Dominican Convent, in a night-time funeral taken by the Rev John Maitland, a Scottish Episcopalian clergyman. The convent was destroyed in the Revolution, and the site obliterated in 20thc bombing. Clan Macpherson Association member, Anthony Rocquet, a land



Cluny and Anthony at the Macpherson memorial

agent from Rennes, by comparing maps and archaeological evidence, has established the site of the garden.

Dunkirk Council has erected a magnificent 8 foot high monument to remember Ewen, which was unveiled by the present Cluny on 28 January 2024, following a civic reception for the Macphersons given by the mayor, in the town hall. At the ceremony, the eleven verses of the remarkable poem 'A Lament for the Laird of Cluny', by Lachlan Macpherson of

Strathmashie, was read by Angus Macpherson of Biallid, in the scholarly translation by Ronald Black. The monument was dedicated [sprinkled with water from Badenoch] by a present day Scottish Episcopalian clergyman, Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch; white roses were laid. Among those present was Clan Chattan Association member, Bodo Schmitz, from Solingen, Germany, who travelled to France for the ceremony. During the weekend, Bodo was elected chairman of the Clan Macpherson Association (Europe Branch).

**Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch**



Bodo Schmitz



# The Kirmichael Project on the Black Isle and the Davidson Connections

By Nick Hide, Clan Davidson

For the past 10 years, the Kirmichael project team on the Black Isle have been doing extraordinary work.

This is a fine example of an enthusiastic local team who have achieved a major restoration project and continue to reveal far more about the different families associated with this historic Black Isle site. I keep in regular contact with Jim MacKay, the leader of this community-based team, and try to contribute to the ongoing research of the families linked to this site where relevant.



map of the area

Kirmichael lies on the shore of the gloriously scenic Udale Bay, on the north east coast of the Black Isle, beside the B9163 road. For many years, the old kirk building has been a ruin and unsafe. Ten years ago, the Kirmichael Trust under the leadership of Jim Mackay, started the restoration project after several years of fund raising. The aim being to restore the historic building and its monuments for use by the local community as a visitor centre and to explain the history of the kirk and people associated with its history.



Kirk Michael before Restoration

The old building and its gravestones tell a tremendous story. Initially there was a medieval church, serving the original parish of Kirmichael. Following the Reformation, the nave was adapted for use as a protestant kirk, whilst the chancel became the Braelangwell Mausoleum. The parishes of Kirmichael and Cullicudden, mostly in the possession of the Urquhart family, were amalgamated by an Act of Parliament in 1662, with a requirement to build a new church at the farmstead of Resolis. However, the estate owners kept the two old kirks of Kirmichael and Cullicudden going until they were too ruinous to repair. Kirmichael continued in use as a kirk until 1769. The chancel was already being used as the mausoleum of the Urquharts of Braelangwell (and in more modern times, the Shaw-Mackenzies of Newhall). In about 1800 George Gun Munro of Poyntzfield, rebuilt part of the nave as a mausoleum for his family.



Kirk Michael during Restoration

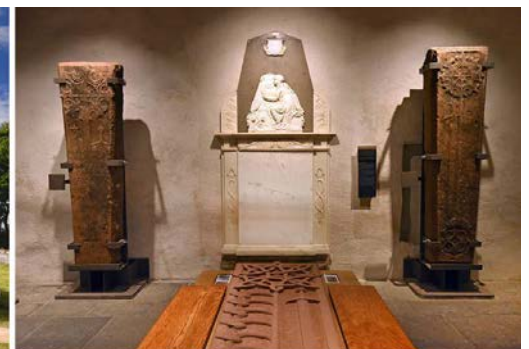
By 2018, the restoration of the building was successfully completed. The project continues with the improvement of mausolea and memorials in the kirkyard and inside the restored kirk. This community lead project is doing extraordinary work. Check out the website

[www.kirmichael.info](http://www.kirmichael.info) and the links to Stories behind the Stones which is a superb on-line illustrated database of the graveyard memorials and the history of the associated families. The research continues with regular work parties, the results being uploaded to the website and the face book page.

There are numerous historical Davidson connections with this site and the nearby estates. Several Davidson graves have been found in the graveyard beneath the turf. For example, a very large ornate flat stone was found just beneath the turf which includes details of Isobel Davidson and David McCulloch of Achmagarry. The date part of the inscription is unreadable, but their 1715 marriage is listed in the Cromarty Parish Records. An even earlier grave slab also found beneath the turf, which refers to Donald Davidstone, miller of Kinbeachie who died in February 1609. This is one of the earliest Davidson monumental inscriptions in the Clan Davidson archives.

George Gun-Munro [of the nearby Poyntzfield estate mentioned above] married Justina Dunbar in 1787 in Dingwall. Justina was the granddaughter of William Davidson and Jean Bayne of Cromarty. She was named Justina, after Justina Mackenzie, the wife of Henry Davidson, who purchased Tulloch Castle in 1760.

The Barkly family, another important local family, also built an enclosure at the Kirmichael graveyard. This includes the family monuments for several generations of the Barkly family. One branch of this Barkly family was in a business partnership with the Davidson of Tulloch family in London from c1819 until the early 1840s. Davidson Barkly & Co at its height was a major London Merchant house with extensive interests in the West Indies.



Kirk Michael, Restored, External & Internal Views



# The Clan MacThomas Gathering of 2023

– a tale of the old and the new

**Kirstie Thoms**

As I sit here sipping on a glass of Persie gin and snacking on oatcakes topped with Glenshee honey, I note that I am enjoying tastes of both old and new. A traditional base in the form of a Scottish oatcake, and new delicacies with the honey and gin, which have only been available in Glenshee in recent years. I then realise that this notion of old and new was a recurring theme throughout the Gathering of 2023. A new Clan hotel, several people attending for the first time, new activities, and many other smaller changes and new additions. Yet all of this against a backdrop of Scottish traditions, ancient gathering grounds, and the rekindling of old relations.

It had been six years since the last Gathering in 2017 – the longest absence from the Glen that the Society has ever experienced. It was a long-awaited Gathering. There was much excitement and anticipation, but there was also uncertainty and apprehension. This was to be the first Gathering in Blairgowrie. Although its location would never match that of the towering beauty of the hills by the Shee River in Glenshee, the Society Council felt that it was nevertheless a very comfortable and practical location. However, it transpired to be so much more than that.

Members from around the world began arriving at the Angus Hotel on Friday 25 August. They were warmly greeted by various Society volunteers and were presented with welcome packs and goodie bags. As early evening approached, the nostalgic sound of the MacThomas pipers and the EMS Highland Pipe band could be heard across the road in the town square. It was a truly authentic Scottish sound to mark the official start of the Gathering.



Finegand with his wife and family

Thereafter, the congregation returned to the hotel and was welcomed by the Chief and his party - Lady Finegand; Thomas MacThomas; Katriona MacThomas; Charlie Pelham and Amy Pelham. It was wonderful that all members of the party

personally welcomed each person in attendance; demonstrating the true community of Clanship. Whilst this was not a new undertaking for some, it was however, the first time for both Katriona and Charlie. Following the Chief's welcoming address, there was a buffet meal, followed by a most enjoyable ceilidh dance practice where both old and young filled the room with enthusiasm and laughter.



Finegand with the EMS Band

On Saturday morning, members headed to Kirkmichael for the Strathardle Highland Games. These were the first Games to be held under Neil Constable – the new Chieftain of the Games – and the MacThomases were, once again, very welcomed guests. Our Clan pipers and the EMS band were invited to play alongside the Coupar Angus pipe band as they marched on to the Bannerfield. Members wearing MacThomas tartan were also invited to join the procession, which was certainly an honour and a proud moment for those involved.

Members then explored the Games at their leisure. Attractions included: trade stands; vintage vehicles; a small fairground; home industries including competitions for cookery and crafts. There was also a dog show and two of our younger members, Eliza and Madeline Thoms, were invited to be judges. In the main arena there was the usual fayre of dancing, piping, and heavy weight games, as well as some more light-hearted events such as pillow fights and 'tilt the bucket'. Nathan Kring from North America represented Clan MacThomas in the heavy weight games and achieved excellent results in the Hammer and Weight Over Bar. There was also a MacThomas tent, which was a source of information and a welcome rest stop for those who chose not to take up post in the beer tent for the afternoon!

Back at the hotel in the evening, members dressed in their finest attire for the formal Society meal. With over 140 people in attendance, it was the largest dinner ever held by the Society. The food was a fine array of Scottish fayre and received great reviews for both taste and service. The Chief delivered a fine speech followed by some gratifying words from Ron Thom, who spoke about his own journey and his time serving as personal piper to the Chief for several years. I

am told that thereafter, several people stayed up to the wee hours sharing a deoch an doris.

On Sunday, Clan members followed the call of their ancestors and made way to the Clach na Coileach. Members were assisted by a group of priceless volunteer marshals which, for the first time in Society history, included two females – another new step towards a more modern Society.



Finegand addressing the Clan from the Cockstane in Glenshee

When the Clan gathered at the Cockstane in 2017, they stood in awe of the beautiful view across the Glen. Six years later, the Cockstane site has changed quite dramatically and the old amphitheatre appearance is beginning to take shape once again and is now made up of native trees, shrubs, and flowers. The area was in full bloom as members stood amongst an array of fauna including edible blackberries and even the Clan flower – the snowberry. In the distance, the familiar sound of the EMS pipe band could be heard as they advanced up the pathway to the Cockstane. They were followed by the Chief and his procession - Sword Bearer Fergus Thoms; Bannerman Chris Pye; Vice President Tom MacThomas, and Vice President Robin Thoms. The Chief then welcomed everyone and gave a speech which particularly drew on the ancient origins of the Clan and took time to remember all of those who had gone before us, both in ancient times and more recently. Ron Thom performed the Clan Pibroch – "Clach a' Choilich" and further solo piping was performed by Iain Coombs and David Thomas. An animated tale of the famous MacComie Mor was delivered by Robin Thoms.

As the EMS pipe band led the procession out, there were mixed emotions in the air; sadness for those not present but also excitement and anticipation for the future. The youngest member present, Oliver Pye, took some tiny footsteps



walking in the memories of his grandfather, James Pye, who passed away just a year prior to the Gathering. Oliver watched on as his father, Chris Pye, carried the Chief's banner, just as his father and grandfather had done before him. This was the purest image of old becoming new.

Members then travelled onto Glen Isla for the Society AGM which was immediately followed by a beautiful wedding vow renewal between Nathan and Virginia Kring. Another depiction of old and new was present here as the couple celebrated their twenty years of marriage and made promises to each other for their future.

After lunch, the Society welcomed the Badenoch Wauking Group who demonstrated Wauking the Tweed – a traditional Scottish way of preparing tweed - another first for the Society. This transpired to be a massive hit and had members of all ages joining in.



Madam MacThomas with young Finegand and his wife, Katriona

That evening, members dressed and assembled for another evening meal at the Angus Hotel. This commenced with an outstanding address to the haggis, delivered by Robin Thoms. Following the Society raffle, the formal ceilidh commenced and later concluded with

all members joining in for Auld Lyne Syne to officially mark the end of the Gathering.



Members of the Clan MacThomas gathering at the Cockstane

The next morning, with heavy hearts, many members said fond farewells and commenced their onward travels. A small group of people joined Ian Thomson and his three sons to say a final farewell to his late father - Honorary Vice President, Iain Thomson. This small group of people travelled back to Glenshee for an intimate ceremony to scatter some of Iain's ashes around the Cockstane and into the Shee Water.

Meanwhile, another group of members were embarking on day one of a four-day tour around the Clan sites and other historical and beautiful parts of Scotland. This group consisted of several people attending the Gathering for the first time. The intimacy of the group meant that strong friendship and bonds were created over those four days. The volunteer tour guides were Robin and Mike Thoms, assisted by Fergus Thoms. Their collective knowledge, wit, and humour, made for an incredibly entertaining and enjoyable trip.

These tours warrant an entire article of their own; but for now, some of the key stops and highlights were: Blair Castle; Pitlochry; Scone



Tom, Younger of Finegand with the Chief of Clan MacThomas

Palace; Stirling Castle; Glencoe; Balmoral, and the Spital of Glenshee. Special mention must be made to the spectacular trip on the Harry Potter train from Glenfinnan across the viaduct to Mallaig. A truly unforgettable experience. The interactive Battle of Bannockburn presentation was also extremely powerful and unique. Notwithstanding these adventures, simply being immersed in the beautiful Scottish scenery was enough to create such a powerful connection with both Scotland and Clan kin. Viewing the Glenshee hills from the top of the Ski slopes provided a sense of awe and gratitude to all who came before us. Likewise, watching the beautiful light radiate between the hills of Glencoe reminded everyone of the raw essence of true connection.

The Clan MacThomas Gathering of 2023 had the perfect balance of old and new; traditions and modern activities; reminiscing over times passed and the joy of making new friends and memories. However, most importantly, the Gathering provided a long-awaited sense of togetherness and community. It reawakened our love for Scotland, our Clan, and our kin.

Haste ye back!

## The Clan Chattan Map Project

Council has formed a sub-committee to redraw the Clan Chattan map. The intent is to replace the oft-found Highlands map with one that far better displays the extent of population pre-Culloden and subsequent dispersal years.

From Badenoch to Petty, Perthshire and Aberdeenshire to the shores of Loch Ness, we descend from a mix of Macphersons, Macdhuids, Mackintoshes, Shaws, Farquharsons, Macbeans, Macthomas, Macintyres, Macandrews, Macgillivrays, Macphails, Macqueens, Macleans, Cattanachs, Macnivens and many more. And from the indigenous folk resident long before us.

Current maps show where our chiefs lived and held sway – but what about the people? All that remains of them today are occasional bits of rubble from their dwellings and sometimes

monuments to their early presence.

The project draws from writings and historical maps of the 16th through 18th centuries and will ultimately show our townships and 'clusters' of community before the eras of depopulation.

This admittedly large and challenging project is being chaired by Rex Davidson, with Richard McBain of McBain as custodian of a sandbox into which research is being dumped for sorting. We already have extensive research by Rex and by Nick Hyde (Davidsons) and Bill Shaw of Easter Lair (Shaws), and future assistance offered by John Mackfall (Macphails), Anne Macquarrie (Highland Archives), Philip Beddows (Macbeans) and by

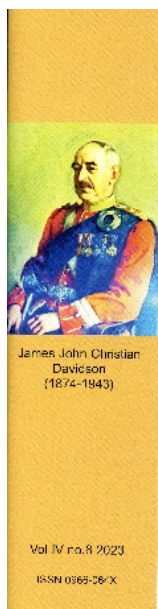


WRD - 1747 - Inverarnie to Dunmaglas

several of our hereditary chiefs: John of Mackintosh, James of Cluny, Iain of Tordarroch, Allan of Dochgarroch.

If you wish to offer your support for this endeavour you may contact Rex at [anacala@telus.net](mailto:anacala@telus.net).





# The Pheon

Clan Davidson  
Association



## News from the Clan Davidson Association

by Nick Hide

**I**t was another busy year for the Clan Davidson Association. We have continued to publish three Newsletters a year and our annual journal, *The Pheon*. This coming year will be the 33rd year that we have published our annual journal. We try to include a wide range of stories about the different families who have left their mark on history.

We continue to research widely and try to help our members undertaking their own projects, as well as responding to the many enquiries received via our website. We maintain very extensive (and growing) historical archives which include details about many different Davidson families and sept names. We try to share as much as possible.

There is still much to research and unravel about the Highland origins of the Davidsons and the sept names. The network of enthusiastic local historians based in the region continue to provide valuable support. We are also interested in the early history of the Davidsons who first appear in the early records of North East Scotland and the Borders.

One of our current projects is to scan and digitise all our remaining historical paper records. Although we ceased printing and filing most paper records about 10 years ago, there are still some substantial files to be scanned.

During April and May, membership secretary Nick Hide enjoyed a long trip down to catch up with his brother in Canberra, Australia as well as taking part in the AGM events of the Clan Davidson Societies in Australia and New Zealand. The Australian event was originally



Clan Davidson Society of Australia AGM Event



Clan Davidson Society of New Zealand AGM Event

planned to be held as a luncheon at Mark Davidson's Tamburlaine Winery in the Hunter Valley, New South Wales. Unfortunately, about a month before the planned AGM, there was a disastrous fire, which totally destroyed the function room and its facilities. The Australian Society soon found an alternative location at the nearby Gartelmann Wines café, also in the Hunter Valley. Over 40 members and their families attended a very sociable and informal luncheon event. Just as Chairman, Geoff Davidson, started the AGM proceedings, there was a massive clap of thunder overhead, followed by a monsoon type downpour, which caused all formalities to cease for about 15 minutes, because of the deafening noise of rain on the metal roof of the function room..... rain stopped play! Subsequently the AGM was completed in record time. Nick gave a brief talk to introduce himself.

The Clan Davidson New Zealand event was a very well organised weekend gathering and great fun held at a hotel in central Wellington. Friday evening involved an informal get together in a nearby restaurant. Saturday morning was free to explore Wellington; the AGM was held on Saturday afternoon, followed by a formal clan dinner with some 50 members and families taking part. Nick

gave an illustrated presentation about some of the important Davidson family connections with New Zealand. Clan Chief, Grant Davidson and his wife Brenda, were present throughout the weekend.

Nick was made very welcome by everyone he met, and everywhere he visited in Australia and New Zealand. There is a wealth of Davidson history in both countries. He is already planning to return down in this coming year.

The Clan Davidson Association held its AGM/Gathering at the Balgeddie House Hotel located on the outskirts of Glenrothes, Fife during the last weekend of September. We had a good number of members and guests taking part including families from Australia, Belgium, Canada, and France. We were fortunate with the weather throughout the weekend which also allowed members and guests to get out and explore the many attractions within easy reach of the hotel.

On the Friday afternoon, CDA members Ian and Ruaridh Davidson from Edinburgh organised a Whisky and Gin tasting event for those members arriving early. This was quite a challenge for most of us who took part as we had to compare and contrast, and identify the region of origin of the samples tasted.



On Friday evening CDA Chairman David Gray welcomed everyone when we assembled in the main function room. Following the meal, Ian and Ruaridh once again surprised us with their version of the TV game show Deal or No Deal, with Ruaridh impersonating TV host Noel Edmonds. There were several rounds of this game which caused much excitement and fun.

On Saturday morning we held our AGM which was completed in a timely manner under the Chairmanship of David Gray, and our President Lord Davidson and reports from David Walker (Treasurer), Nick Hide (Membership Secretary & Pheon Editor), and Colin Davidson (Events Organiser).

Throughout the rest of the day, members got out in all directions exploring the area; one couple even brought their bikes with them. When we all met up on Saturday evening, there was much talk of Falkland Palace, and the small coastal towns of the East Neuk and St Andrews. We held our Clan Dinner in the main function room followed by music and dancing with the Skelpit

Lug Ceilidh Band. We also had our usual Roll a Coin competition for bottles of Whisky and Gin, and Colin Davidson surprised us with his new Spin the Wheel competition.

On Sunday morning Nick Hide gave an illustrated talk to highlight some of the many Davidson families linked to Fife, including

some of the ancestors of the members in the audience. Throughout the rest of the day, the members enjoyed a wonderful warm sunny day to explore the area. Over of half those attending the weekend event stayed on for the Sunday evening and met up for an informal dinner together in the hotel restaurant.



Clan Davidson Attendees

## A CAT ORIGIN FOR CLAN CHATTAN

by John Wilson of Kilwinnet

Most of you will be familiar with the Highland wildcat and its association with Clan Chattan, but like me recently, you may not have been aware of a particular cat found on the Isle of Bute. Having been to the island on a few trips on other genealogical missions over the past few years, I only recently spotted an ancient 9th-century stone on display in the island's Museum. Intrigued? So, let me begin.

The stone, called 'MacAlister's Stone', is classed as a Picto-Scottish cross-shaft. It bears a faint carving of a cat with an arched back, a pair of crested love birds, a Latin cross and other unidentified images. It's not known where the stone cross originally stood. It was re-erected in the 1880s after lying over the burial plot belonging to a family of that name before finally being taken to the island's Museum in 1996. It may have been carved to commemorate Catan, founder of the monastery at Kingarth, and situated at the south west end of the island.

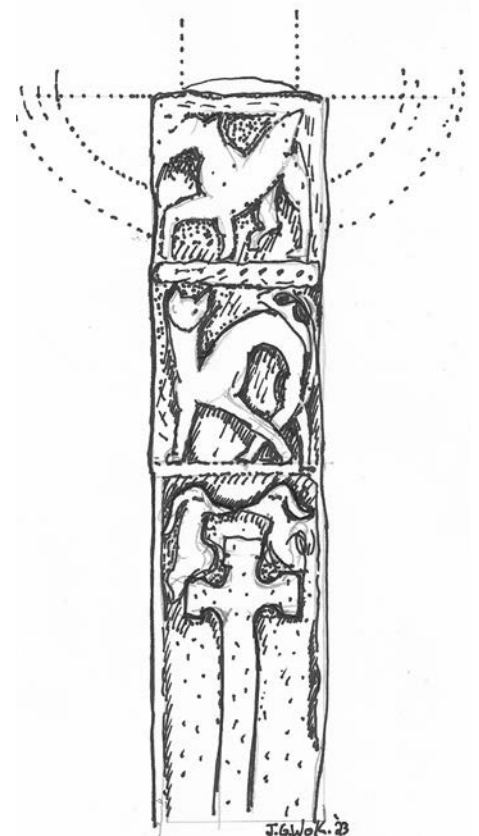
The Isle of Bute has a long history, and much of that time was anything but peaceful for the island's occupants. The Vikings came to invade and later settle, they were followed by the early Stewart kings, who regarded the island as their bread basket and hunting ground. But

to investigate the story of Bute's ancient cat, we turn to the early Christian period, AD 400-800.

From Lochaber in the north to Bute in the south, the sea dominated the history of western Scotland for centuries. Before the waters would feel the pull of Viking oars, Irish monks came to Bute in small boats to preach their Christian gospels. The great St. Ninian soon established his influence from his base in Whithorn to the Clyde Valley, over the Campsie Fells, and on into the land of the Picts. It's not known if Ninian ever set foot on Bute, but the feet of other holy men certainly have, and one known to history is the missionary, Catan. The story goes that Catan arrived on Bute in the late sixth century to found a monastery on the island. Catan was from Ulster and appears to have been accompanied by his nephew, Blane, who he later sent back over the sea to Bangor for religious training. Blane returned to Bute, and it is said Catan handed his monastery and bishopric into his charge. While this was going on at Kingarth, Columba was establishing his monastery on Iona.

Having exhausted my library here at Kilwinnet, I decided to take my quest onto the internet. There, I read that our beloved Catan became very popular and revered as a saint as far north as the Hebrides. He was also associated with various religious sites on the islands of Gigha, Luing, and Colonsay. It is claimed that Catan lived at today's Kilchattan Bay on Bute, or, it maybe where he possibly first landed on the island. Little more is known of his life apart from Catan being the son of a king of Dalriada.

And we now come to the best bit. One of St. Catan's servants, Gillichattan Mor, may have given rise to Clan Chattan of Lochaber!



Cat Origin Drawing



# Dalarossie:- The Davidson connections with a remote highland kirkyard

By Nick Hide

Over 10 years ago, I first 'discovered' Dalarossie, a remote isolated kirk hidden away in the headwaters of the River Findhorn, in an area known as Strathdearn. Like many visitors to the Highlands, I have driven the main A9 highway between Aviemore and Inverness, too often chasing the clock, rather than thinking about the history of the highland hinterland on either side of the road. On this occasion, I had deliberately turned off the main road at the sign for Tomatin, not to visit the famous distillery but to head up the valley on single-track road looking for a remote kirk marked on my Ordnance Survey map but without a name. I was in for a major surprise.



View of Dalarossie Kirk, looking east down the Findhorn valley

Dalarossie Kirk is a small building located in a field on a bend in the river Findhorn. The field is gated. Sheep graze the field so if visiting look out for the usual hazards. Across the field, there is a further gate which is the entrance into the walled enclosure which makes up the kirkyard. The current kirk dates from 1790, but this site is believed to be that of an 8th century church dedicated to the Celtic saint, Fergus. The kirk is kept locked, so don't expect to find it open except when there are periodic services or special open day events.

I was surprised to find a significant cluster of Davidson gravestones, some of the inscriptions which I could read. Two years after my first visit, the Highland Family History Society [HFHS] published their detailed survey of the kirkyard, and subsequently I was able to read the transcribed inscriptions in detail. The survey included details of 221 memorial stones with dates ranging from 1751 to 2011. There were 19 memorials with 43 Davidson names inscribed, with as many other inscribed names associated with the Davidsons such as spouses and other relations, and the names of their farms or crofts where the families lived. Most of these headstones are arranged in two adjoining rows, an indication of their possible

family links. The Davidson headstones are of a different designs and stone; there was certainly no standard design being used by these families.

Prior to my visit, I had no idea that I would find this extensive cluster of Davidson family history in such a remote location. Dalarossie had been unknown to an earlier generation of Clan Davidson researchers. In comparison, the nearby Moy kirk has only 5 Davidson headstones, with 9 named Davidsons; some of whom are linked with the families documented at Dalarossie.

During the last 10 years I have gradually built up an extensive archive about all the Davidson names listed at both Dalarossie and Moy, where they lived and how many are related. The parish records and early census reports reveal there were at least 16 different Davidson families living in the Dalarossie & Moy parish at the end of 18th century. Sadly, there are no surviving early burial records. The Dalarossie gravestones and their inscriptions help to confirm this cluster of families. Some of these families were related to each other but at the moment it is impossible to accurately determine all the early family connections because of the lack of any formal records. The HFHS surveyors found no 18th century Davidson gravestones at Dalarossie. The earlier generations of these Davidson families possibly left no memorials, or any which previously existed, have not survived. At some point, there has been a 'tidy up' of this kirkyard with many of the stones embedded in concrete.

Another possibility is that the Davidson families only moved into the Dalarossie area in the 18th century, although I somehow doubt this. There is a report in the Journal of the Clan Chattan of a large international gathering being held at Moy on 4 August 1951 where some 1200 people attended. A presentation

was made to Vice Admiral Mackintosh, then head of the Mackintosh family, by Mr John Davidson of Aultnaslanach who was listed as the 'oldest tenant on the Mackintosh estate whose ancestors had occupied the same farm for 400 years'. Sadly, the Aultnaslanach farm building disappeared during major road works associated with the A9 highway in recent years and I have yet to identify John Davidson's descendants.

Today, I am told that there are none of the name Davidson now living in the area around Dalarossie. However, I continue to research these families and am aware of some of the descendants who now live as far away as Australia, South Africa and Chile.



Dalarossie Memorial 1



Dalarossie Memorial 2

Three examples of the different designs of the Davidson gravestones found at Dalarossie.



Dalarossie Memorial 3



# 'Celebrating the Clan Maclean'

In June last year, the Clan Maclean had their week-long International Gathering on the Isle of Mull. These gatherings are usually held every five years, but this time it was postponed from 2022 due to uncertainty of travel following the pandemic. Under the chairmanship of Anne Maclean of Dochgarroch, about 650 people attended the event.



Anne and Allan enjoying the Gathering

One highlight was the launch of a new book 'Celebrating the Clan Maclean' written by Clan Chattan Association member Ian MacLean from Nova Scotia. His family came from Drumnadrochit and are part of the Macleans of the North. The book charts the work of the Clan Maclean Heritage Trust over its first 25 years, and details the 100 projects that it has inaugurated round the world, but it is in effect a history of the clan



Book Cover - Celebrating the Clan Maclean

right through to its diaspora overseas. The book is available from the Duart Castle shop.

Another interesting event during the week was the unveiling of a cairn at Kilbrennan, on the west side of Mull, in honour of the Rankin family, who had a school of piping there. Second only to the MacCrimmon school on Skye, many pipers were taught there before it was disbanded in the late eighteenth century. The Macleans have a distinguished record in the piping world, and the Heritage Trust gives financial support to Mull and Argyll pipers and pipe bands as well as



Rankin cairn at Kilbrennan

bursaries for young pipers at the Piping College in Glasgow.

## A Clan Maclean Wedding



Hector and Lauren by the hut

Hector Maclean of Dochgarroch, younger, and Lauren Hughes were married at Balerno in September, in a ceremony conducted by Hector's father. Lauren comes from Ottawa and a large number of her friends and relations came to Scotland for the event. Hector is the founder and owner of whisky and cigar specialists 'Jeffrey Street Whisky and Tobacco' in Edinburgh, and the couple will be living in the city.

## New Clan Arrival

We are delighted to announce the arrival of our son, Ossian Maclean-Simpson, on the 25th October 2023. He is a welcome addition to the Macleans of Dochgarroch as the second grandchild.

Ossian entered the world early, weighing only 5lbs, at Raigmore Hospital in Inverness. He is bringing us immeasurable joy (and a touch of exhaustion!). Both Augusta and Ossian are thriving and in excellent health.



Ossian Maclean-Simpson



Proud Mum and Dad with Ossian

We wish to express our deepest gratitude for the abundant love, blessings, and support showered upon us during this special time. We eagerly anticipate introducing Ossian to the Clan Chattan members at an upcoming gathering.

Slàinte,

**Augusta and Daniel Maclean-Simpson**



# PHOTO





# GALLERY





# The Clan Chattan Association in New England, United States

by Ray McHatton



Ray McHatton

This past year I was presented with the opportunity for a closer look at one of the many facets which make up the Highland Games here in New England.

During August, I spent a weekend in Vermont at the Quechee (Kwee-chee) Games, a festival organized each year by the New England Scottish Arts Centre, a group dedicated to the preservation of Scottish heritage and culture through music and dance. While at this event I met two young men from Massachusetts, Callum Stocker and Samuel Stocker. These brothers are members of the New Hampshire Pipes and Drums here in the United States, a band which competes in a yearly circuit of Scottish Highland Games and plays for local town and city parades and public events both large and small.

Samuel has the snare drum and also plays the fiddle; his elder brother Callum is a bagpiper. The Stocker brothers are of the Clan Macpherson, a fact which they proudly affirm by keeping a piece of the “Creagh Dubh” – the Black Rock of the Macphersons -- in their band uniform sporrans. Their Uncle Ronald MacPherson cut and refined those talismans from the very stone with which that Sacred Mount was formed untold eons ago; stone as unyielding as the Clan itself.



Samuel Stocker at the Spey

Now, of course you may say that the sound of the pipes, and the rhythm of the drums is something that can be heard throughout the day at any event such as this. That is so very true, and yet in my fifteen-plus years of involvement

with the Highland Games, the air ever-filled with Scottish tunes, I have never known much about what happens behind the scenes. Not at all like me to miss the details...



Callum Stocker

Through speaking with and watching these two young Macphersons at our New England events, I was able to get an idea of what they do, how some of the grading and judging is done, and even a bit about the instruments themselves. The effects of humidity and temperature, for instance; at one point I believe Callum had some adjustments to think about with the pipes when moving from a cool shaded practice area into the bright sun to line up for the Massed Bands. The head, or skin of the drums can likewise be affected by the weather, causing subtle tension changes in the “skin” or “head” of the drum, (the taut membrane which vibrates when struck).

On this particularly fine sunny Saturday in Vermont, having travelled there to represent the Clan Chattan Association, I felt it fitting to put forth a donation in the name of the CCA as a sponsor in support of the Scottish Arts awards program. Forward I marched, armed with a very limited knowledge of the categories, balanced by a strong desire to take part. I was handed a clipboard with a scant few choices left, and made a selection designated “Most Promising Piper, Grade 4 Junior”.

About four years ago, at the age of twelve, Callum Stocker had begun to explore his Highland heritage, and one day announced to the family that he felt he should be playing the pipes. Soon, he began lessons. His MacPherson grandparents living in Scotland were delighted to see this interest developing, and gifted him a very special set of bagpipes! These pipes were carried and played in the 1960s by the piper for Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, a much-celebrated hero of the D-Day landings during the Second World War.

Fourteen-year-old Samuel Stocker will be moving into Grade 4 Junior snare drum during the 2024 season. At age eleven, Samuel began playing the traditional Scottish Fiddle, with training including the “Strathspey and

Old Highland Reel Collection” comprised of c1780 pieces by Angus Cumming, the famed Clan Grant piper and fiddler. When visiting his grandparents last summer, Samuel was extremely fortunate to be able to play some of these old tunes at their original locations, such as Achnac’s Reel at Auchernack Farm. He also played William Marshall’s Banks of Spey on the banks of the Spey! (see the photo) How very moving indeed to link the music to the land -- and of course, it’s all connected -- the clans, that vital cultural identity, that feeling of belonging to both a people and a place.

These boys are that link...



Callum Stocker at Loon 23

As the afternoon drew to a close, the Green Mountain skies now turned grey, I watched the stage intently as the chairperson of judges called “Callum Stocker” to the podium to receive the Grade 4 Junior title! Recognition so well deserved and I was able to play a part on behalf of the CCA. Another great memory of these wonderful Scottish Highland events. Callum was able to put the funds toward the purchase of a wooden chanter for his everyday pipes, an upgrade which he tells me will deliver a richer, fuller response. This will be instrumental as he progresses upward through the grades, which descend numerically. In addition to his success in Vermont, Callum claimed identical titles at three other major events, propelling him to Number One Grade 4 Junior Piper in the 2023 Eastern United States rankings!! Consider this – from the state of Maine south to Florida, there are many, many pipe and drum bands and a virtual legion of young pipers in those ranks.

It seems to me these musical types must certainly receive a good physical training, as they are always dashing about on the way somewhere... signing up for this, lining up for that, tuning up for this, practicing for that, and then catching their breath (or perhaps holding it?) while waiting for the day’s results. I have heard it said that the parents of children involved in the bands get a rather nice workout as well...

I do hope my two young friends will come by the tent to play for us this year, and have some shortbread to keep their strength up.

**Touch Not these Catts!**



# Clan Chattan Association 90 years celebration

Friday 15th December 1933 in the St Andrews Club in London, a group of Clan Chattan Folk gathered to create an Association. The aims of which were (and still are) to encourage friendly social interaction, to encourage and maintain interest in the history and traditions of the Clan Chattan Confederation.

This meant that the Clan Chattan Association was to celebrate being active for 90 Years!! Definitely time to pop a cork or two.

So, in January 2023 I set about arranging the AGM and Dinner for the Association. Over the previous 20 years the celebrations had been at the Lochardil Hotel in Inverness. It had great connections with Clan MacBean.

Imagine my surprise when I contacted them to confirm our usual booking for the first Thursday in August, to be told that they were no longer doing event catering! Yikes! New management and covid concerns had meant that they were only going to be a bed and breakfast venue for the foreseeable future.

After some headless chicken syndrome running around, I managed to contact the Kingsmills Hotel in Inverness and they were able to confirm our date in August and we were booked.

The Hotel has a rich tapestry of history dating back to the late 18th Century. Over more recent years the hotel has added more bedrooms and a leisure centre and spa. The conference and event area, spacious, and suited us perfectly.



The assembled crowd attending the Clan Chattan Association 90th Anniversary



Cutting the cake Pauline McGillivray John Mackintosh of Mackintosh

Our guests arrived at 4pm for cups of tea and chatting (our very best talent). We then settled down for the AGM. Piped in, the top table of council entered and got seated. The business

side of the AGM went smoothly. Our president, John Mackintosh of Mackintosh then called on Pauline McGillivray to cut the 90th Celebration cake.

The AGM over, we all dispersed into the foyer for champagne to celebrate. Our council member Rob MacIntosh and Isla McIntosh then gathered everyone together in the garden for a group photo.

A delicious 2 course dinner followed, and the evening continued with laughter and much 'friendly social interaction'.

Pop over to the Gallery to check out photos.

**Denise McIntosh**

## Clan Chattan Association AGM. August 2023

Our recent visit to Scotland was undoubtedly one of the most productive I have experienced in a long time. All my travels to Scotland in the past have been to attend the Clan MacPherson Association AGM and Clan Gathering and enjoying all their festivities. This trip was the first since the pandemic that disrupted all lives around the world. Just prior to departing for the UK, I had contacted Ray McHatton from the New England area of the United States. After telling him that I had reserved attendance for my wife and I at the Clan Chattan AGM, I thought it a great opportunity to deliver his message as to the work he has been doing representing Clan Chattan around his region.

I hope his report will be added to the AGM 2023 minutes as well as published in the publication Touch Not.



Cluny, Bonnie and RT

Being greeted by the officers of all the attending Clans and being welcomed by David Mackintosh was a plus but the highlight was

the privilege of reading Ray McHatton's Report to the attending Clan Chattan Members and Officers. There was a lot going on during the gathering in Inverness . Celebrating the 90th Anniversary of the Association , social gathering, and dinner with what can only be described as Ladies and Gentlemen of the highest caliber.

**Robert T. McPherson Chairman  
United States Branch  
Clan Macpherson Association**



RT, Reporting to CCA at the AGM



# Clan Chattan at the Tartan exhibition at V&A Dundee

by Louisa Cross

This was an outstanding exhibition at V&A Dundee from April 2023 to January 2024 and I hope may be touring at a later date.

The exhibition took the visitor on a roller coaster ride beginning with the elements of colour, pattern and proportion which make up tartan in its many widespread manifestations. The technicalities and skill of the weavers working out the warp and wefts on a carefully constructed pattern for the length and width of the loom, ensuring the colours worked to best advantage, gave me even more admiration for Jamie Scarlett (who is referenced in the book on which this exhibition is constructed – Tartan by Jonathan Faiers. I am sure Jamie would have been delighted to see how the study and display of tartan has continued to grow and develop in many different directions and would have been fascinated to see this exhibition.

The earliest example of authenticated tartan - a sample found in a Glen Affric bog in the 1980s and carbon dated and dye analysed to the 1500s - is displayed amongst the introduction to the grid which underlies and inspires the creation of tartan sets.

The exhibition shows tartan not only in clothing, in a huge number of designs and styles, but also the way in which the grid has been interpreted and displayed with digital and other methods onto a multitude of objects. These include a football, thermos flask, porcelain, the seats and a picnic basket in a red Hillman Imp, a telephone box, a video games controller, amongst many others. The colour and design of the exhibition signage beautifully complement the colours and grids which make up tartan.

Tartan's many diverse expressions of identity, passion, power, diplomacy, tradition, design, inclusiveness and rebellion in clans, the military, punk, drag, royalty, music hall, politics and more. The diversity of tartan and its interpretation includes outfits designed by Vivienne Westwood and the links to punk rock and other movements such as the Suffragettes. The kilt worn by Alan Cumming cheekily round his neck is shown in Christian Hook's portrait of Alan. Alan himself gave one of the many talks

surrounding the exhibition. Other eclectic items include Billy Connolly's kilt worn at the 2019 New York Tartan Day parade is displayed and a scarf worn by a Bay City Rollers fan in the 1970s. The late Doddie Weir features in a portrait, wearing his inimitable trews and jacket, made from the colours of Scotland and that of Melrose Rugby Club. The Balmoralisation of tartan is shown with elaborate dressing table and furniture. Outfits, in wool and silk are displayed on a range of mannequins along the walls, with portraits, photographs and film. The global reach of tartan comes across very well. Examples of French couture by Chanel and Dior, with more recent clothing created and displayed in Japan. Later in the exhibition designs blending colours of the Nigerian flag with Celtic Football Club. Throughout much of the exhibition, there are voiceovers running, including a Scottish-Thai boy talking of his Gaelic heritage in tartan.

Clan Chattan features throughout the exhibition. Firstly the painted setts displays across one of the large walls include Macpherson, Farquharson, Maclean, Macintyre, MacQueen and Macintosh. I was also delighted to find a Macintosh sample amongst the many handwoven samples on the wall beside a film of Willie Meikle, weaver in Kilbarchan. A leather poetry book by Duncan Ban Macintyre from 1848 and a photographic print from 1891 of Mary Macpherson, Gaelic poet and activist, who wore tartan in rallies protesting against the destruction of crofting communities, shows the strong Gaelic oral traditions and their association with tartan.



Francis Farquharson collection

A section on Bonnie Prince Charlie and his legacy had fragments of the Moy Hall plaid given to Lady 'Col' Anne Mackintosh in 1746 following the Rout of Moy, together with extracts of letters from the time.

There is a cabinet dedicated to three striking outfits commissioned and worn by Frances

Farquharson, the fashion journalist, fashion editor for Vogue and Harpers Bazaar in the 1940s, and wife of Captain Alwyn Farquharson of Invercauld.



Alexander McQueen collection

Three radical designs by Alexander McQueen, in the McQueen sett, are displayed in a single cabinet. McQueen also features in the smaller exhibition opposite the entrance to Tartan entitled 'The Fashion Show : Everything but the Clothes'.

Alan Bean's Apollo mission to the Moon is encapsulated in a framed collage of photographs of the astronaut and his mission, with the swatch of McBain tartan which he took to and from the Moon at the centre.



From Alan Beans Apollo mission

This was a truly inspiring exhibition and hopefully members will be able to see it at another venue when touring dates are available.



The Fatal '45



## Gone but not forgotten

### CCA mebers who passed away in 2023

JM Talkington USA  
Grace MacBain UK

## Two good friends of the Clan Chattan have died recently.

**B**rigadier John Macfarlane was a Gaelic scholar from Argyll, who had a close connection with the Macintyres. He was asked by Clan Macintyre to represent and sign the new Clan Chattan bond in 2009 on behalf of the 'Macintyres in Badenoch', one of our constituent clans. More memorably, as our seanachie, he recited in Gaelic, with great acclaim, the genealogy of each of the chiefs before they signed in the presence of the Lord Lyon.

In 2019 he was present at the anniversary of the Battle of Glenshiel, and declaimed the Gaelic poem on the event. The following day he led the combined clans to the site of the Rout of Moy, and to the graveside of Donald Fraser at Moy churchyard.



Brigadier John Macfarlane with John Mackintosh

As well as being a native Gaelic speaker, John was a linguist in many languages, a great asset in his work in the army, and its time 'behind the lines'. Officially he was head of the education corps.



Roddy Balfour

**B**orn in Tasmania, a former soldier, lawyer, and latterly a Councillor on Highland Council for 23 years, covering Ardersier, Croy and Petty, Roddy Balfour sadly passed away on 11 January 2024. Roddy had a rapier mind and a wonderful sense of humour. He always went out of his way to help others and was a hugely respected local Councillor. Roddy was passionate about the Gaelic language and was an accomplished piper, as well as being a judge at the Glenfinnan Games. He was a great friend of the Lachlan and Celia Mackintosh of Mackintosh and supporter of Clan Chattan Association, often visiting the clan tent at the Highland Field Sports at Moy and giving advice on the Mackintosh Mausoleum at Petty. Rex Davidson remembers meeting Roddy, armed with tools, at the Mausoleum to help see how we could move it forward, a number of years ago. I am sure many others will also remember him fondly. He took a great interest in and lent his support to the events of the 2009 Band of Union signing. I well remember him dancing with his late wife, Rosemary, at the ceilidh at the Thistle Hotel during those memorable celebrations. A true Highland gentleman, Roddy will be sorely missed in CCA and beyond.

## New Members since February 2023

Welcome to all of our new members.

- Kendall Bean US
  - Tim Elgin USA
  - Christopher Hendrik USA
  - David Thomson UK
  - Melonie Blair-Fabian USA
  - Calum Shaw UK
  - Jake Noble UK
  - Myken Spiesz USA
  - Michael TS Clark USA
  - Evan McConnell Ellis-Bain US
  - Robert Farquhar UK
  - Joseph McIntosh USA
  - CA Wortley USA
  - Claire MacPherson USA
  - Callum MacPherson Stoker USA
  - Samuel MacPherson Stoker USA
  - Francis McIntosh USA
  - Maryanne Skidgel USA
  - Marjorie Tucker USA
  - Martha Mawson UK
  - Keith MacPhail USA
  - Christine Ball UK
  - Ken Misch USA
  - Tracy McIntosh UK
  - Jonathan McIntosh USA
  - Daniel Muschate UK
  - Morag Muschate UK
  - Duncan MacPherson UK
  - Christopher Ian McIntosh NZ
  - Peggy Brewster USA
  - Olivia Love USA
  - Craig Jones, UK
  - Kyle Shaw UK
  - Aleksander Jorgensen Norway
  - Scot Shaw USA
  - Kevin Gillespie USA
  - Daniel McPherson Canada
  - Tim Score UK
  - Linda McFalls Whaley, USA
- 2 members have returned, one after a short absence and one a slightly longer absence, welcome back to you both.
- Paul Evans Holbrook US
  - Richard Halstrick McIntosh



## The McBane Event 2023

Organised by: The Cat's Glove - School of Traditional Defence.

Under the Patronage of Richard McBain of McBain, 23rd hereditary Chief of the Ancient Clan MacBean.

What is The McBane Event I hear you ask? It's a weekend of traditional defence teaching sessions during the day, and socialising in the evening, open to people from all around the world who have an interest in HEMA (Historic European Martial Arts).

Originally, it started from a group of friends getting together each year to remember – and celebrate – the last duel fought by Donald McBane, a soldier, duelist, and Master Swordsman who wrote a treatise on swordsmanship (and other fighting arts) that included his autobiography. That duel took place at the bottom of the Royal Mile in Edinburgh in 1726... when Donald was 63! He trounced his opponent, by the way, giving him seven wounds and breaking his arm. You may also know of him as the Government soldier who made the Soldier's Leap at the Battle of Killcrankie.

The group of friends were predominantly students of swordsmanship, who had started learning while at university in Edinburgh, learning of Donald McBane at that time.

This celebration took the form of a Pub Crawl (of course – students!) finishing at the Royal Oak; but, during the mid 2010's, with many of them now involved in teaching HEMA themselves, they came up with the idea of running classes teaching McBane's, and other, fighting methods over a weekend.

The inaugural McBane Event took place in 2018, under the patronage of the late James McBain of McBain, 22nd Hereditary Chief of the Ancient Clan MacBean, and I was honoured to be able to attend their formal dinner, with my wife Margaret, as the Chief's personal representative (see my article in the 2020 edition of Touch Not). I also observed many of the teaching sessions over the weekend.

The second McBane Event took place the following year, 2019, and I was again honoured to be the personal representative of James McBain of McBain, as an observer & attending their formal dinner.

The third Event was scheduled for 2020; but this other **global** event kinda overtook it, and meant it had to be postponed. That doesn't mean that nothing happened in 2020, 2021, or 2022... Instead of running in-person Events,



Group Photo - Pre Formal Dinner - Photo Allan MacBain

the McBane Event went virtual, with online seminars on Scottish history, Clan history, Donald McBane, swordsmanship, research, and a fun quiz, taking place over a couple of days, which were enjoyed by all those taking part – I even presented a seminar on **Clan MacBean: Sword and Spirit**, myself.

Fast-forward to the beginning of 2023, and with things mostly returning to normal, The Cat's Glove decided to try organizing the 3rd in-person McBane Event (again).

After making enquiries regarding availability of their usual venue, and potential instructors, they decided on the weekend of Friday 15th to Sunday 17th of September.

After a gap of three years, they may well have been nervous about whether they could get enough people to attend, or that the schedule of seminars would be enjoyable enough.

I can tell you that they succeeded beyond all expectations!

My personal intent for 2020 was to have taken part in the whole weekend... not just being an observer on the sidelines; and I carried that intent forward to 2023.

Starting on the **Friday** afternoon by meeting at the Bow Bar, on West Bow, in Edinburgh, a select number of 'early arrivals' walked up to the National Libraries of Scotland, for the rare opportunity to get hands-on with original copies of McBane's book "The Expert Swords-man's Companion: Or The True Art of Self Defence", and contemporary treatises by other swordsmasters. Also available were swords and other weapons McBane would have found to be very familiar (including Rob Roy McGregor's sword, and a reproduction of an early 'plug bayonet' design McBane had had a bad experience

with on the battlefield), which were part of a presentation on weaponry by Paul Macdonald.

This visit was supervised by Mike Smith & Steven Kilbane (The Cat's Glove), Paul Macdonald (Macdonald School of Arms), and a member of NLS staff.

After the visit to NLS we headed back to the Bow Bar, where specially created McBane Ales were available on tap for the weekend, courtesy of Mike Smith and Stewart Brewing.

The first evening of socialising included visits to the Bow Bar, Sandy Bell's and The Royal Oak, Stories were told, songs were sung, and music was played till the wee hours... with the occasional libation for parched throats.



McBane 2023 - Event Banner - Photo Allan MacBain



**Saturday** dawned dry, if a little cloudy, with us congregating at the Assembly Roxy in time for a very interesting warm-up exercise, led by Stephen Kilbane – Stick Wrestling! This was an enjoyable, cooperative, exercise – more a kind of dance, than wrestling – using a four foot staff, and I was pleased to be able to share this activity with my friend Emanuel Meyer, from Switzerland. With each of us supposedly taking turns to ‘lead’, we were to follow the flow of the other’s movements, while keeping at least one hand on the staff. If the ‘leader’ managed to move in such a way that the ‘follower’ lost their grip, they won that round. To make it more interesting, every so often the ‘follower’ was to close their eyes & the ‘leader’ was to move smoothly while trying **not** to ‘win’. As Emanuel and I managed to close our eyes at the same time on more than one occasion – each believing we were the ‘follower’ - hilarity ensued!

Next up was the welcome and induction for the weekend’s training activities by Mike Smith, followed by the main training session of the morning.

This was Broadsword vs Smallsword, led by Maestro Paul Macdonald, a demonstration, followed by a practical session on the seeming disadvantage of the smaller Smallsword when up against the larger, and heavier, Broadsword. It turns out that, in the hands of a Master (or Maestro), that assumed **dis**advantage can end up being an advantage.



Smallsword - NLS - Photo Mike Smith

Lunch was followed by the final Saturday session – Staff Fighting Skills, led by Ben Hamilton. This session consisted of a demonstration of the basic skills and techniques used in defence, and offence, with a five foot long staff; followed by putting those skills into practice in groups of four. If you’d like to see a sample what we were doing, I recommend watching the videos Ben has recorded with Tom

Langhorne for Tom’s YouTube channel (details at the end of this article).

And with a short Salute ceremony ending the day’s sessions, we all headed off to prepare for the evening’s formal dinner, reconvening at The Bow Bar. As usual, we took a group photo before heading to Howie’s Restaurant, and, in the fine tradition of Donald McBane, a better group of ragamuffins would be hard to find.

The formal dinner was, as ever, excellent; after which, as Richard McBain of McBain’s representative, I relayed his greetings and well wishes for the event and those attending it. Along with his hope to be able to attend in person in the near future.

The evening ended with us repairing to The Bow Bar where I left the group before they headed out to do the same rounds as the night before. All in all, an excellent day.

**Sunday** began with a slightly later start than Saturday – by design – but with the same warm-up stick wrestling activity, led by Stephen Kilbane. Again, Emanuel partnered with me... and again, hilarity ensued. You’d think we would have learned from the day before!

As we started later, there was only one session for the morning – Sword & Targe: Highland Survival Equipment - which was led by Tom Langhorne.

Tom gave an excellent presentation on Highlander survival techniques, and discussed research into how the construction of the Targe stood up to dealing with firearms of the period. He also demonstrated... with your humble correspondent as his dummy... how to wear the Great Kilt. It has to be said that he looks better in it than I do.

A quick lunch was followed by us getting down and dirty in the first of three afternoon sessions, They Don’t All Fight Like Gentlemen: Close Plays in a Broadsword Brawl – led by Robert Brooks.

This session demonstrated some of the dirty tricks you might encounter, and how to defend against them, during a brawn where broadswords were in play. No fingers were broken during this session... but it came close in a few cases, even running the drills at slow speed. Some of these tricks were **nasty!**

We had a very short break... to catch our breaths... before Mike Smith introduced the penultimate session – The 7 vs 1 Workshop – based on an encounter Donald McBane had while on campaign in Europe, where he found himself up against seven, admittedly fairly drunk, soldiers at once. McBane successfully defended himself those opponents who were armed with smallswords, by using his

broadsword and a stick. Escaping without harm, and without killing any of them.

Mike then told us that the skills we learned during the session would be used in the final session – The McBane Challenge – where those who wished would be able to re-enact that encounter.

We practiced in groups of four, with three attackers and one defender.



McBane 2023 t-shirt - Photo Allan MacBain

Finally, we reached the point where those who felt confident in their ability, took part in the McBane Challenge. To pass the Challenge, they had to defend themselves from seven attackers – disabling at least five, and outrunning the rest. If an attacker was hit with what was considered a blow that would disable them, they were to drop out. There Challenger had to reach one of two safe areas that were identified. If the Challenger was swarmed by the attackers, they were deemed to have been killed. Quite a few people took part.

Once the Challenge had been completed by all those who signed up for it, we all took part in the closing ceremony, during which those taking part in the McBane Challenge were presented with a McBane Challenge patch.

And finally, with a Salute, the McBane Event 2023 came to a close.

The McBane Event will be back in 2024, and if you would like more information please check out The Cat’s Glove website, where you’ll find information available.

**Allan MacBain MBCS**  
**Appointed Chieftain of the Ancient Clan MacBean, under the Authority of Richard McBain of McBain, 23rd Hereditary Chief of the Ancient Clan MacBean.**  
**Personal Representative in Scotland of Richard McBain of McBain, 23rd Hereditary Chief of the Ancient Clan MacBean.**

Cats Glove website :  
<https://www.thecatsglove.com>

Tom Langhorne:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@FandabiDozi>



## The following article is an extract from The Clan Farquharson Magazine – The Lions Face **Vive La Belle Rebelle**

by David Shirreff

**T**HREE HUNDRED YEARS after her birth in 1723, Anne Farquharson, known as “Colonel Anne”, is beginning to get some of the recognition she deserves. On September 10th the Borders drama group Duns Players performed their play Colonel Anne: Jacobite Heroine in Braemar Village Hall, about as near to her birthplace as they could get. On the same day they visited Braemar Castle, a Farquharson stronghold since 1731, which has been undergoing radical refurbishment.



The cast at Braemar Castle

An audience of locals and clan members from far and wide saw a play fresh from its success at the Edinburgh Fringe. The story centres on Colonel Anne, who defied her husband the Laird of Mackintosh to raise troops for Bonnie Prince Charlie in the 1745 Jacobite Rising. She saved the Prince’s life during a night raid on her house at Moy, with a handful of her household scaring off 1,500

Hanoverian soldiers. It was an action that became known as the Rout of Moy.

Was she in love with her warrior chief Alasdair Macgillivray? He died a hero’s death at Culloden. Did she have a dalliance with the wayward Bonnie Prince Charlie? He called her “La Belle Rebelle”. How did her marriage with Angus, Laird of Mackintosh and Chief of Clan Chattan, survive their conflicting loyalties? For a short while, each became the other’s prisoner-of-war. Somehow they settled their differences. All that and more is explored in a fast-moving play that lasts just over an hour. Anne’s courage in raising her clansmen, in protecting the Prince at Moy, and as a spirited prisoner of the British in Inverness, is the stuff of legend. Moreover, a few years after the Jacobite defeat at Culloden she found herself dancing with the victorious “Butcher” Duke of Cumberland at a ball in London and gave him as good as she got. She forced him to dance to a tune called “The Auld Stuarts Back Again”. Colonel Anne, one of Clan Farquharson’s most admired figures, deserves wider recognition today. That was the reaction some years ago of James Shirreff, my cousin, when he found Colonel Anne mentioned on our family tree and decided to dig deeper. He unearthed a gripping story and co-opted me into writing the script. It was a drama crying out to be put onstage. The play has been four years in the making. It was first performed script-in-hand at the DunsPlayFest in May 2019, then again that August during Ballater Victoria Week, with the late, great Farquharson chief Captain Alwyne, at the age of 101, in the front row. Then Covid struck, preventing further performances until this year’s Fringe. Duns Players did eight performances in Edinburgh to mostly full houses.

There was lively interest in this hero of the 1745 Jacobite Rising who until now has been less celebrated than Flora Macdonald (who assisted the Prince’s escape to France), Clementina Walkinshaw (the Prince’s mistress) and Jenny Cameron (who led 300 of her father’s clansmen to Glenfinnan to meet the Prince). Portraits of those three women are displayed in the Jacobite Room at the National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh, but not one of Colonel Anne. That oversight is all the more puzzling because the gallery owns a fine mezzotint of Colonel Anne by James Macardell after a painting by Allan Ramsay. Duns Players hope that members of Clan Farquharson will add their weight to a campaign for better recognition of their forebear, both at the National Portrait Gallery and at Colonel Anne’s final resting place in the North Leith Churchyard.

Just before the play hit Edinburgh, five Duns Players in 18th century costume visited the churchyard and caused quite a stir.

Colonel Anne moved to Leith after her husband died in 1770 and lived there until her death in 1784. Little is known of that part of her life, but the archive at her birthplace, Invercauld House, may still harbour some secrets. There is no gravestone at the Leith churchyard, only a metal plaque commemorating her among other incumbents. We would like to see something more fitting. What next for the play? Duns Players are planning a celebratory performance soon on their home turf. There are also discussions about a production near to Moy Hall, seat of the Mackintoshes, on or around February 16th 2024, to commemorate the Rout of Moy. A production overseas has been suggested, perhaps in North America to entertain far-flung Farquharsons and other members of Clan Chattan. Vive La Belle Rebelle!

## **Colonel Anne Jacobite Heroine**

by Louisa and Stuart Cross

**I**n the 300th year since Lady Colonel Anne Farquharson Mackintosh’s birth, a play written by David Shirreff and produced by his cousin, James Shirreff, both of whom have family connections to the redoubtable Col Anne, was performed by the Duns Players at the 2023 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. James Shirreff also played the part of Lord Blakeney, Governor of Inverness Garrison, in the performance. All the actors gave a feisty performance, most of all that of

Col Anne herself who played the heroine with panache and passion. The music and dance incorporated into the play were choreographed well in The Space, in Jeffrey Street, Edinburgh, with the audience seated around the action of the play. We were transported back to those turbulent times and felt the intensity of emotion and conviction. The proceedings took place in 1746 at Moy Hall; at the Dowager Lady Mackintosh’s house in Inverness Castle; at Petty Churchyard; and in London two years later, when Col Anne famously asked ‘Butcher’ Cumberland if he would ‘dance to her tune’ which was ‘The Auld Stuarts back again’.

The play told the story of Col Anne sympathetically and the action around the Rout of Moy was played in a very engaging and well-constructed manner. It was wonderful to see



from DunsPlayers website

the story of this heroine of the 45 being brought to life. Penny and Laurence Sutherland from Moy were also in the audience, which added to the Moy atmosphere and we were delighted to meet David Shirreff and the cast after the performance to congratulate them and thank them before their journey home to Duns!



# 2023 was a very exciting year for The Clan Chattan Association in the United States

Shortly after the Pandemic when people were gradually getting back to some sort of normality CCA were once again able to attend a number of the Highland Games in the USA. Some events had faltered, some were yet to make a reappearance and some were enjoying more attendees than ever before.

The Stone Mountain Games in Georgia, for instance, had more visitors than ever in the history of this event. There is a large number

of McIntoshs in the area which also boasts an entire McIntosh pipeband. Its an incredible games to visit.

In March last year, for the very first time, we were able to have a presence at the Prescott, (Preskett) Highland Games in Arizona. This event attracts a large number of Clans to participate.

**@ClanChattanAssociation**

**Like and Subscribe** to the Clan Chattan Association YouTube Channel for updates about upcoming events and join us on YouTube for some coverage around the world.

**Facebook and Instagram**  
**#ClanChattanAssociation.uk**

The Clan Chattan Association will be attending more Highland Games this year than ever before.

The 2024 Calendar of events in the U.S will be hosted by Ray & Wanda McHatton, Cindi McIntosh Misch and Ken Misch, or Diane Debrohun.

<b>April 13-14th</b>	Las Vegas Highland Games, Las Vegas, Nevada.
<b>May 25-26th</b>	Scottish Fest USA, Costa Mesa, California.
<b>June 1st</b>	The Maine Scottish Festival at Old Orchard Beach, Maine, (Hosted by Ray & Wanda McHatton)
<b>June 15th</b>	No Fame Games Milford Massachusetts. (Hosted by Ray & Wanda McHatton)
<b>June 29th</b>	the Highland Festival at Fort Number Four / No Fame Games, Charlestown New Hampshire. (Hosted by Ray & Wanda McHatton)
<b>July 11th-14th</b>	Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, North Carolina (hosted by Diane Debrohun)
<b>August 1st-3rd</b>	Clan Chattan Association AGM Inverness, Scotland
<b>August 24th</b>	The Quechee Games Hartford, Vermont. (Hosted by Ray & Wanda McHatton)
<b>August 31st-Sep 1st</b>	158th Scottish Highland Gathering and Games, Alameda County Fairgrounds, Pleasanton, California.
<b>September 20th-22nd</b>	New Hampshire Highland Games Lincoln, NH. (Hosted by Ray & Wanda McHatton)
<b>September 28th-29th</b>	Prescott Highland Games, Prescott Arizona
<b>October 13th</b>	Scotland, Connecticut // Venue TBD. (Hosted by Ray & Wanda McHatton)
<b>October 11th-13th</b>	Seaside Highland Games, Ventura, California.
<b>October 18th-20th</b>	Stone Mountain Highland Games, Stone Mountain, Atlanta, Georgia.

We look forward to seeing you at these events.  
**Cindi McIntosh**

## A wedding

Cindi, the Clan Chattan Association piper gets married.

On June 25, 2023, Prescinda Ann McIntosh married Dr.Kenneth Edward Misch at Sunset High atop the rooftop of the La Fonda, overlooking the historic Cathedral Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi. The venue was adorned with red flowers, candlelight and more Mackintosh tartan than most will ever see in one room. The celebrations lasted for four days beginning with a country and western welcome reception and ending with a Mardi Gras brunch guest sendoff.

They have known each other for some 25 years through the piping community in southern California and have often performed together on numerous occasions including fashion shows and whisky tasting events. They spend their time mainly in Las Vegas Nevada and in Prescott Arizona and enjoy many wonderful adventures all around the world!



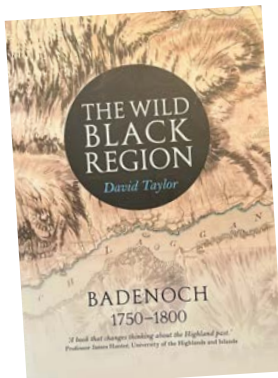
Wedding group photo



## The Wild Black Region: Badenoch 1750-1800: David Taylor

A Review by W. Rex Davidson, FSA Scot.

The critical closing years of the eighteenth century have seen few studies of Highland regions anything like the quality of David Taylor's work in his book *Badenoch*.



The Wild Black Region cover

Taylor is far from selective in his approach to the changes in the farm economy, and in the community and culture of this important Clan Chattan region. His in-depth look at the effects of the new society that evolved after Culloden concerns not just the often written about landowners, but the tacksmen, sub-tenants and even the lowliest of cottars as they responded to harsh changes in community, the realities of the Badenoch environment and commercial opportunities.

In the introduction he lays out the involvement (and non-involvement) of the clans in the '45 and how the clansfolk universally suffered in its aftermath as a result of the Hanoverian military presence. The destruction of dwellings and farm buildings and the theft of livestock that formed the economy was experienced by all, regardless of allegiance, and left the people in dire straits. Taylor's analysis of the place of tacksmen in the hierarchy before the Rebellion and changes already in progress is well-explained and very important to the following chapters, but he also includes commentaries regarding claims to duthchas and the close bond of the tacksmen and their under-tenants.

He takes issue with other historians who have expressed dim views of the tacksmen of the period. Although he acknowledges the rent burdens imposed on their sub-tenants, he credits them with the enterprise and energy to make the necessary changes, such as land improvement and cattle marketing, that were unfolding elsewhere in Highland society.

The common people still operated within a subsistence farming economy that was heavily dependent on their mountain environment. He points out, however, that they too were quick to exploit market opportunities that came their way, despite the post-Culloden legislation that created intolerable pressures on clanship.

What Taylor argues is that change, despite outside influences, was proactive in Badenoch and that

amidst such chaos the residues of clan society still remained. The question 'Who has destroyed the Gaelic people?' pervades the text and challenges the established trajectory of chief to landlord at the expense of an increasingly superfluous tacksmen class. He drags the maligned tacksmen out of their past ignominy and celebrates the entrepreneurial skills lacking in the profligate Duke of Gordon, their primary landowner. In so doing he strikes a comfortable balance between a crusade against landlordism and an apology for the decidedly rapacious actions and behaviour of the landowning classes.

Taylor is careful to point out that his book is not a study in isolation; that Badenoch was not an island and did not 'operate in a vacuum, but within a rapidly changing national dimension' and government policies aimed at 'civilizing' the indigenous population. It did not experience the wholesale clearances of the Western and Northern Highlands and the Isles, but it experienced immense change nevertheless.

Taylor has structured this book well, encompassing a half-century of rapid change by organising his introduction and first two chapters in considering the socio-economic dimensions of Badenoch.

The following four chronological chapters are dedicated to change in the twenty years 1750-1770, and the following three decades, the 1760s, 1770s and 1790s. This is not an entirely convincing approach because it seems to set aside the natural evolution of change and the full value of events over time.

Setting aside that reservation, however, Taylor's exploration of tacksmen's adjustment to changes in their roles within the clan system to within the new world of commercial farming is of great value. His sub-themes, such as the confrontation between certain tacksmen and the Duke of Gordon's factor and chamberlain, the lives of personalities like John Dow, the 'Black Officer', embody core themes of the book and his rich use of notes, correspondence and fact-based sources bring key figures very much to life.

This is a rewarding and satisfying book. Future historians elsewhere in the Highlands may have much to learn from the manner in which Taylor has dealt with inevitable change in this singular region.

(I look forward to reading David Taylor's next book, the more recently published 'The People Are Not Here: The Transformation of Badenoch 1800-1863'. A synopsis: 'Badenoch's journey moves from the relative prosperity of the Napoleonic Wars into the terrible post-war destitution that devastated peasant, tacksmen and the Duke of Gordon alike. Estate reform and 'improvement' gradually brought a degree of economic and social stability, but inevitably resulted in depopulation as people were forced off the land.)

## The Inverness Highland Games and the Clans Tent

In mid-July, 2023, the Association of Highlands Clans and Societies (AHCS) were present at the Inverness Highland Games. The Clan Chattan Association is an important member of this association. This year the AHCS were located in a smaller tent than in pre-Covid years, but the atmosphere was just a lively and busy as in previous years. It was a day of periodic torrential downpours, so the Clan Tent often provided welcome shelter for the many visitors, friends and dogs. Some 20 Highland clans and societies took part.

It is hoped and anticipated that something similar will take place this July.



Clans Tent - Prior to Games Opening - Inverness Highland Games 15 July 2023



Donald & Denise McIntosh in discussion with John Mackintosh



Visitors at the Clan Chattan Stand inside the Clans Tent