



Association of Highland Clans & Societies

Newsletter: January 2016

Keeping the flame of “The Fifteen” alight

AHCS leads the way in commemorating the Battle of Sheriffmuir on a particularly wet day in November



James Erskine, Earl of Mar & Kellie, descendant of the leader of “The ‘15”, rallies Jacobites at Alloa Tower on 29th October 2015

When Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch realised that there was no commemoration planned for the 300th anniversary of the Battle of Sheriffmuir, he and his wife—AHCS Secretary, Anne Maclean—took the initiative and organised something themselves.

With the support of The 1745 Association, the Earl of Mar & Kellie, and representatives of other clans and families that had been at the battle, a memorable event emerged. *See Lois MacDonell’s report on Page 6.*

This event topped off a year in which the fortunes of the AHCS continued to flourish. Our membership has now risen to twenty five Full Member clans (who also represent at least 19 small clans, or branches of

clans that have their own chiefs), plus two Associate Member clans and one Associate Individual. The full list is given on the back page, but some of those listed may yet have to renew for 2015-16 (our membership year runs from 1 April to 31 March). **Members are asked to check your status and renew if necessary.**

Our Eve-of-Culloden social event at the Glenmoriston Townhouse Hotel on the night of Friday 17th April was very well attended, and included an interesting discussion about septs of clans.

The return of the Inverness Highland Games to Bught Park in July allowed Highland Council to offer the AHCS the use of a larger tent, so some 15 clans were able to be represented, plus the Highland Family History Society and the Highland Archives.

An enthusiastic AGM followed at Eden Court, where the election of Ruairidh MacLennan of MacLennan as the Association’s new Deputy Chairman was particularly welcome. He and Jen Scott (of the Stewarts) agreed to form a sub-committee to consider organising an AHCS Ceilidh or Tartan Ball. They asked that help and ideas in this sphere be forthcoming. It was requested that more information be provided, and put on our website, about future events planned by member clans, especially anything that other clans might join in with.



LEFT: Wreath laying at Alloa Tower. L to R: Lady Mayor, Earl of Mar and Kellie, Norman McPherson, Jim MacRae.

Inverness Highland Games 2016



*The Lovat Frasers with their strawberries
(the strawberry leaf on their arms is explained by
the French for a strawberry - "une fraise")*



*Councillor Helen Carmichael,
the Provost of Inverness,
at the Clan Chattan table*



The Chisholms



The Camerons



The MacDonalDs



*The Macphersons fill the front row at the AGM
in the Maclean Room at Eden Court*



*The Secretary & Treasurer are
obviously happy with proceedings*

The Chairman's Column



As reported on the front page, the Association's activities for 2015 started with a well-attended Eve-of-Culloden social evening. It had a briefing from John Graham, who co-ordinates the activities of the Highland Clans Partnership Group [HCPG], about the Scottish Clan Event Fund [SCEF], and the help available in completing the rather intimidating application forms for grants from the fund.

The genesis of the fund was discontent amongst Highland Clans about the difficulty of getting grants from government to help with cost of putting on international gatherings, and it was gratifying that the Minister of Tourism, Fergus Ewing (who also happens to be a local MSP) saw our point and acted to set up the fund for this purpose. Though the fund is Scottish rather than just Highland, it has already helped a number of Highland Clans put on ambitious gatherings, including in 2014 the Munros and in 2015 the Mackenzies, with the Grants and Macleans – amongst others – to come in the next two years.

The actual commemoration at Culloden on the Saturday was particularly gratifying for me; not only because I had the honour of placing a wreath on behalf of our member clans that were not represented in person at the event, but also because I was supported whilst doing so by Colin Robertson from Elgin (one of my childhood homes) who was representing a clan that had only recently joined the AHCS. Colin is pictured with me, above left, at the Culloden cairn.

Clan MacKenzie are particularly proud of the fact that one of our members, Andrew Grant McKenzie, is now the Property Manager for the NTS at Culloden, and one of the highlights for our overseas members at this year's Clan MacKenzie International Gathering was Andrew's personally guided tour of the battlefield.

A highlight of our second such gathering (in the year 2000) was a torchlit march into Dingwall with our ancient enemies the Munros, with whom we then shared a dram in the Station Square to mark our formal reconciliation. This year we decided to approach the MacDonalds about having a reconciliation with them. We suggested it be based around events to mark a famous battle between our two clans that is supposed to have taken place at Pairc, just outside Strathpeffer in 1490, following the rejection by the then MacKenzie chief, Coinneach mac Alasdair, of his MacDonald wife.



We started the day at Loch Kinellan, where Susan Kruse of ARCH (Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands) told us what was known about the crannog there which is supposed to have been an early home of the Mackenzie chiefs (she's pictured above so-doing). We then walked on to view the reputed site of the battle on the edge of the village. In the afternoon we held an informal seminar in the Strathpeffer Community Centre at which Aonghas MacCoinnich from Glasgow University told us how the events surrounding the battle fitted into the history of the Highlands at that time; and Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch talked a bit about the traditions surrounding the involvement of his clan, who fought at the battle with the MacDonalds.



Cabarfeidh's son Colin enjoying the ceilidh

In the early evening the main protagonists, with their supporting chiefs and chieftains (Alexander Brodie with the MacKenzies, and Dochgarroch with the MacDonalds), mustered at opposite ends of the village, and marched to the square to confront each other. Upon being called to order by the Lord Lieutenant of Ross & Cromarty (Mrs Janet Bowen), who was supported by Hector Munro of Fowlis, Cabarfeidh and Lord MacDonald exchanged swords, shook hands, took a dram together (with the Lord Lieutenant and their supporters), and the two clans marched off in a colourful procession to Castle Leod to carouse the night away at "The Reconciliation Ceilidh". Everyone agreed it was a wonderfully enjoyable occasion, and a great example of clans working together in the spirit of the AHCS. See the pictures elsewhere.

My first memorable event of 2015 was walking into a room in Knoxville, Tennessee, in February to give a lunchtime lecture, and finding that over 200 people had chosen to lunch out of bags whilst listening to me talk about “Clans, Septs, and Surnames”. Having been surprised by the turnout, I was then shocked to discover that only half a dozen of them had ever heard of *Scotlands People*—the website that allows all the main records required for Scottish family history research to be used anywhere on earth that has an internet connection. Similar results emerged at all the meetings in the USA that I spoke at last year (about ten, stretching from Minnesota to Texas), and my experience is duplicated by other Scots genealogists lecturing in the States.

This ignorance of our world-beating genealogical resource is an on-going issue for discussion at two of the bodies I sit on: the Scottish Ancestral Tourism Group [SATG], and the Scottish Clans & Families Forum [SCFF]. It merges fairly seamlessly into the whole question of the Scottish Government’s “Diaspora Policy”, and the way in which *Visit Scotland* [VS] tries to persuade members of the diaspora to come home to Scotland outside “Years of Homecoming”. It’s the contention of some members of the SCFF—a body that includes a number of clan chiefs, and representatives of multi-clan organisations in North America and Australia—that the government doesn’t really have such a policy (but should do), and that VS does not devote sufficient resources to attracting visits from those who would most obviously have a natural inclination to come to Scotland.



It is of course a fair point that VS has to try and persuade all sorts of people from all over the world to come to Scotland; and that, given how popular our country and its products are in Europe, for instance, scarce resources have to be shared out—and maybe even directed towards countries that, precisely because they have no part of the Scottish diaspora, need educating all the more about the beauties of Scotland. However it’s still a shock to turn up at the Stone Mountain Highland Games and Scottish Festival—one of the biggest such events in America—and find the Reception sponsored by *Tourism Ireland* [TI] and the first tent that one comes to in the Clan Village belonging to them (see picture).

It’s not as if this body representing fellow Celts, that one would expect to see at a Celtic Festival (of which there are many in the States), was sharing pole position with VS at this Scottish Festival. It wasn’t because there was no sign of VS anywhere. No representation at the Reception; no tent on the ground; not listed amongst the sponsors of the games; and no ad in the large glossy programme, though *Tourism Ireland* had the whole of the inside page.

Though this situation has existed for a few years, I was so struck by it this last time—in the light of American ignorance of *Scotlands People*—that I wrote immediately to Fergus Ewing and my fellow members of SATG and SCFF drawing their attention to it. I had a reply quite soon from VS themselves; the promptness no doubt stimulated by the imminence of a SCFF meeting to be chaired in person by the Minister. As well as suggesting that VS didn’t have the same funding as TI, it said its research showed attending Highland Games in North America did not stimulate visits to Scotland. Elsewhere in the same letter, however, it said that VS had in the past attended some such games, and provided figures that showed that visits to Scotland went up (yes up) in the years of, and immediately after, such attendances at Highland Games!

Clearly TI think it’s worth spending the money attending such events; they even paid for a band to be flown from Northern Ireland to play at this Scottish Festival. What do they know that we don’t? I’ve asked that question, which was echoed amongst others by Malcolm MacGregor (Convener of the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs), in a further letter to the Minister and colleagues on the SCFF, along with a number of other questions about the relevant figures (for the budget of VS versus TI, and the proportions each spends in North America, and then specifically on such events). I’ve also asked if such promotions are considered too expensive because they have hitherto always involved flying VS personnel out from Scotland; an expense that maybe could be alleviated by using the good offices of Scottish organisations in America, such as the American-Scottish Foundation and COSCA (both of which are represented on the SCFF).

My ability to hold out much hope for sensible progress on such questions from VS and the Scottish Government has been dented by bureaucratic pig-headedness or wilful misunderstanding in another, far less important matter. Having been instructed by VS that their logo must be used in publicity material for gatherings supported by grants from the SCEF—and wanting to highlight the role of the fund—I spent some time adding the relevant words to the VS logo (as shown below). I was quite pleased with the result, and thought the time, which for an hourly-paid researcher like myself is a precious asset, well spent. It was galling therefore later to receive a missive from VS saying their logo was sacrosanct. When I raised this at the SCFF, the Minister suggested that a separate logo should be created for the SCEF, and an action point was noted to that effect. In ticking off all the completed action-points at our most recent meeting however, the Minister said that he’d been advised the creation of a new logo would be a waste of time & money. Of course it would be; and it’s not what I asked for. All I wanted was appreciation of the time that an unpaid volunteer had already put into creating something that recognised both VS and the SCEF, and a request for VS not to be so silly about it. I hope others will wish to use it.



Reconciling the MacKenzies and MacDonalds



The MacDonalds are on their way



The MacKenzies are waiting



The Chiefs exchange swords (above) after a call for reconciliation by Janet Bowen, Lord Lieutenant of Ross & Cromarty, supported by neighbouring chief Hector Munro of Fowlis (they are pictured below)



The Lord Lieutenant's party look on from the Pavilion steps as Caberfeidh and Lord MacDonald, shake hands



Supporting chiefs, Brodie of Brodie (left) and Maclean of Dochgarroch (right), share a dram with the principals



The two clans march out of Strathpeffer together on their way to Castle Leod for "The Reconciliation Ceilidh"

Tercentenary Commemoration of the Battle of Sheriffmuir

13th November 2015

We had been warned by Society Secretary, Anne Maclean of Dochgarroch, that the going was likely to be heavy underfoot and that we should come suitably shod and clad. How right she was! The event began with lunch at the Sheriffmuir Inn, which was substantial and sustaining. Soon after we clambered into the minibuses, kindly laid on by the Association, and travelled over the Muir to reach the roadside site of the Macrae memorial cairn, to which Macraes make annual pilgrimage. After a welcome and suitable introduction from Jim MacRae, white wreaths and many individual white roses were laid in tribute and Piper Jimi McCrae bravely played a lament, despite the rain and the cold.



Members of Clan Urquhart at the Macrae cairn

Just nearby is a small cairn which was erected by the 1745 Association to commemorate all who fell that day. Gathering there, we were given service sheets by Association representative Glen MacDonald and were led in prayer by Canon Bob Harley, Rector of St Mary's Kirriemuir, before singing the 23rd Psalm and hearing a rendering of 'Allan Waters', both read and written by James King. Further prayers were followed by the laying of wreaths by Mike Niven, for The 1745 Association, and John Nicols, for The '15 Northumbrian Jacobite Society. A moment's silence was followed by the playing of 'Lament for the Children'.



Canon Harley leads prayers at the cairn erected by The 1745 Society



At Gathering Stone. L to R: Sir Lachlan Maclean of Duart, Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch, Hector MacLean, Brig. John MacFarlane

It was not until we left the road and the weather conditions worsened to sleet that the group began to realize what it had let itself in for, as the path petered out and the land became seriously boggy. The realization of how it might have been three hundred years earlier inevitably came to mind quite starkly.

It probably took about a quarter of an hour to reach the 'Gathering Stone', which is a low horizontal boulder covered by a somewhat fearsome-looking metal cage. Everyone gathered round in a circle and The Very Rev. Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch, standing in for the AHCS Chairman, Graeme Mackenzie, welcomed everyone and explained that the stone was probably a fallen over Standing Stone which long pre-dated the Battle. Nonetheless, it created a very particular place in which to honour those who had fallen all those years ago. There certainly was a very special atmosphere in that remote moorland location.

Brigadier John Macfarlane read, in both Gaelic and English, *Là Sliabh an t-Siorraim*, A Song to the Battle of Sheriffmuir, and The Rev Colin Renwick, Minister at Dunblane Cathedral, led the company in prayer. The Earl of Mar and Kellie was the first to lay a wreath, followed by wreaths from Clans Campbell, Chattan, Donald, Maclean, Macpherson, Stewart, Urquhart, the AHCS and a pine branch laid by MacAulay. A lament 'The Battle of Sheriffmuir' was played by Kyle Orr who had learned this less well known tune specially for the occasion.

Following the ceremony, Sir Lachlan Maclean of Duart and Morven asked everyone to look for his lost *sgian dubh*, which had belonged to his great-grandfather. Amazingly it was found!

Afternoon tea back at the Inn was extremely welcome, helping us to warm up cold fingers, dry out and share with others the enjoyment of a memorable and worthwhile day.

Lois MacDonell of Glengarry

The 1745 Association

“Not another one of those period costume fancy dress groups!” you may think when reading the title of this article. People have been known to jump to that very false conclusion about the 1745 Association, but nothing however could be further from the truth. The 1745 Association is a historical organisation, whose expertise and academic interest covers the period of Jacobite history known as “The ‘45.” In other words, the Jacobite Rising of 1745/6, when Prince Charles Edward Stuart, otherwise known as Bonnie Prince Charlie, landed in Moidart in an effort to reclaim the “three crowns” for his father James VIII/III.

The Association was founded in 1947 as a strictly non-political entity, complete with a constitution and now having four aims and objectives;

To study the Jacobite period.

To record and preserve the memory of those who actively participated in, or had connections with the ‘45.

To mark the appropriate sites.

To endeavour to preserve the Jacobite Heritage. (This last objective was unanimously agreed at the A.G.M. of 2015, being a significant shift towards conservationism)



1745 Association cairn and plaque marking the spot at Loch Nan Uamh from where Charles Edward Stuart departed for France on 20 Sep 1746.

The Association has four patrons; namely: The Rt. Hon. Lord Ogilvy, Sir William MacPherson T.D. of Cluny and Blairgowrie, Donald MacLaren of MacLaren, and Ranald MacDonell of Glengarry.

Current membership stands at 260 world-wide even including a member from Puerto Rico! The principal libraries of Scotland and other similar organisations such as The 1715 Northumbrian Jacobite Society are also among our members.



The current Chairman is the eminent historian Dr Christopher Duffy MA PhD, author of "The '45" a definitive military history of the Rising. Together with several other academics, including the archaeologist and TV presenter Tony Pollard, as well as those who just have a fascination and great knowledge of the period, the 1745 Association comprises diverse but very sociable and friendly group of people with a common interest and enthusiasm for Jacobite history.

The Association's journal, "The Jacobite," is a tri-annual publication, which keeps members informed of important events and also features "auction notes" as well as various articles of Jacobite historical interest.



The Association has over many years erected commemorative plaques and cairns at various locations of Jacobite significance in many parts of the country, the most recent being at St. George's Gardens in London to commemorate the 17 who were tried and executed for their part in the '45 Rising and buried within the Gardens.

The three day Annual Gathering, including the A.G.M and a final night formal dinner, is the social and historical highlight of the Association's year, when as many members as possible congregate in a hotel and visit various locations of Jacobite interest in that locality. In 2015 the Gathering was based at Connel Ferry in Argyll, with "The Appin Murder," as the weekend's historical theme. It is one of the major advantages of being a member of The 1745 Association that members often have access to both people and places the general public do not have.

The 1745 Association would welcome expressions of interest from anyone wishing to become a member, and further information is available on their website at: www.1745association.org

About the AHCS

Full membership is open to all clans judged by their peers in the AHCS to be "Highland" – whether represented by a Society, Commander, or Chief. Non-Highland clans and families may become Associate Members, and thus enjoy preferable rates at our events and a voice, but no vote, in our Council. Highlanders with no clan organisation may become Individual Members, on the same terms as Associate Members. Our events are intended to be open to all clans and families, but where space is limited preference will be given firstly to Full Members, and secondly to Associate Members. The full constitution, details of current membership fees, contact details for the clans, and for the Association's officers, can be found on our website: www.highlandclans.org.

FULL MEMBERS (subject to renewal for 2015-16):

Buchanan

Cameron (M'Gillonie, M'Martin, M'Sorlie of Glen Nevis, M'Lachlan of Coruanan, Cumming of Achdaliu).

Chattan (Mackintosh, Shaw, Farquharson, M'Bean/Bain, M'Phail, M'Gillivray, M'Queen, M'Thomas, Macintyre in Badenoch).

Chisholm

Currie/MacMhuirich

Davidson

Donald (representing Clanranald, MacDonell of Glengarry, MacDonald of Keppoch, MacDonald of Sleat, etc).

Donnachaidh (Robertson)

Fraser of Lovat

Grant

Iver/MacIver

MacAulay

MacFarlane

Macfie

MacKenzie

Maclean

MacLennan

MacMillan

Macpherson

Macrae

Matheson

Munro

Stewart

Sutherland

Urquhart

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

Clan Fraser Society of Scotland & the UK

Clan MacKinnon Society (USA)

Iain McIntyre-Younger of Culmullin

Events in 2016 to be attended by AHCS or a Member Clan (on the basis of last year's attendances):

15 April: Social Evening and Informal Seminar on some subject of mutual interest: Time and place to be advised.

16 April: Battle of Culloden Commemoration organised by the Gaelic Society of Inverness at 11.00am.

2 July: Gairloch Highland Gathering. Clan MacKenzie.

16 July: Inverness Highland Games: 20 pitches in AHCS tent will probably be available (sharing may be possible). To be followed by tea and the Annual General Meeting of the AHCS – probably at Eden Court (TBC).

21 July: Mull Highland Games at Tobermory. Clan Maclean.

27 July: Arisaig Highland Games. Clanranald (Clan Donald).

5-6 Aug: Moy Game Fair. Clan Chattan.

6 Aug: Newtonmore Highland Games. Clan Macpherson.

6 Aug: Aboyne Highland Games. Clan Cameron.

6 Aug: Strathpeffer Highland Gathering. Clan MacKenzie.

6 Aug: Stewart Highland Games & Ceilidh at Ballone Castle, Portmahomack, near Tain.

Details from Jenn Scott: info@stewartsociety.org

11 Aug: Ballater Highland Games. Clan Farquharson.

13 Aug: Abernethy Highland Games. Clan Grant.

20 Aug: Glenfinnan Gathering & Highland Games. Clans Cameron & Donald.

Any additions or corrections to the above listings should be communicated to the Secretary (listings will also be available on our website). Please also notify the Secretary of any special events – International Gatherings etc. – that your clan will be involved with.

Association of Highland Clans & Societies, Hazel Brae, Balnain, Glenurquhart, IV63 6TJ.

Tel: 01456-476267.

Chairman: Graeme Mackenzie. Email: graeme@highlandroots.org

Dep. Chair: Ruairidh MacLennan of MacLennan. Email: chief@clanmaclennan-worldwide.com

Treasurer: Rossie Macrae. Email: rossie.macrae@hotmail.co.uk

Secretary: Mrs Anne Maclean of Dochgarroch. Email: highlandclans@aol.com. Mobile Tel: 0778-946-3992

Committee: Very Rev. Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch. Email: dochgarroch@aol.com

Duncan Cameron. Email: duncan-cameron1@btconnect.com

Norman McPherson. Email: mcperson.norman@googlemail.com

Donald McIntosh. Email: donald.mcintosh@btinternet.com