

THE FIERY CROSS



Official Newsletter For Clan Am Cu

APRIL 2004

AFTER ACTION REPORTS

SCOTTISH HERITAGE DAYS



Luchdaich bhur musq. Clan Am Cu, portraying the Highland Independent Company of Foot, loads their muskets during the battle at Fort King George.

Neil Fitzgibbons was the early dog, arriving at *Fort King George* early Thursday evening, March 25. Finding none of the Clan Am Cu on site, he hunkered down in the enlisted men's barracks and kept the home fires burning, so to speak. He tended the fires all night long and even started a fire in the baking oven for **Miss Vicky**.

Uaireigin Cu, Doannon Cu

Britt Brinson arrived about mid-morning on Friday and entered the fort to find Neil in the barracks helping Dave Temple present a program on soldier-life to some of the hundreds of school kids attending part of the Scottish Heritage Days Celebration. After the lunch, Brinson took over for Temple and gave several short talks about the Darien Highlanders and the Highland Independent Company of Darien. **Larry "Lone Dog" Lynch** arrived about mid-afternoon, followed by **Philip Boyd** late in the day. **Ron Brimer**, our newest member, even put in appearance. Ron formerly worked for Georgia Public Television as well as the museum display section of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

The evening was spent in fellowship and cooking steaks and baked potatoes. Fitzgibbons, playing his tin whistles, and **Jimmy Hull**, of the *Georgia Highland Rangers*, playing his bodhran, kept us all entertained. Some of Hull's pards came by with some tasty mead. The weather was very pleasant, clear and about 50 degrees. The sky seemed to hold a million stars and the quarter moon cast a wonderful glow across the fort. **James Heldreth** slipped in about 3 a. m.

We awoke to a clear cool morning. Our clan registered and received our ammunition about 10 a. m. Afterward, we held the first of several musket drills. We are using Bland's 1726 drill. After a few fits and starts, we finally hit our stride and began to pick up the drill. We formed for the battle about 2:30 p. m., along with **George Strickland's** *Georgia Highland Rangers*, under the command of **Scott Hodges**, portraying **General James Edward Oglethorpe**.

Due to a scheduling conflict, the Spaniards were not able to attend this year, so plans to reenact the *Battle of Bloody Marsh* were scrapped. Instead, Indians, led by **Jim Sawgrass**, attacked the fort. **Jeff** and **Neal Parr**, some of our old Civil War pards were part of the attacking force. After a sharp fight, they were driven off.



Clan Am Cu at Musket Drill (L-R: Larry Lynch, Britt Brinson, James Heldreth, Neil Fitzgibbons, & Philip Boyd). Photograph courtesy of Ronald & Sharon Brimer.

Following the battle, our clan held another drill and performed a live fire exercise. Many of the park's visitors stopped by to visit us. One in particular, **Todd Hagmaier**, showed some interest in our group, taking numerous pictures. We invited him to share our mess (marinated pork back strap and baked potatoes) with us and he ended up staying over in the barracks. Saturday evening topped the previous evening for

fellowship as numerous folks came by to visit.



Loisg. Clan Am Cu unleashes a withering fire at Indian attackers.

Photograph courtesy of Ronald & Sharon Brimer

Sunday morning, as they say, came early. With nothing on the schedule, folks began to head for home. Boyd pulled out about 7 a. m., followed shortly by Hagmaier. Heldreth headed home about 9 o'clock. Brinson and Fitzgibbons left about 10. Before heading home, Brinson spoke about the Darien Highlanders at the *Kirkin' of the Tartan* ceremony at the First Presbyterian Church of Darien. Founded in 1736, it is the oldest Presbyterian Church in Georgia.

Special thanks once again go to **Ken Akins** and **Brad Spear** of *Fort King George* for a fine weekend. Their hospitality and support were once again greatly appreciated by the members of *Clan Am Cu*.

WORMSLOE COLONIAL FAIRE & MUSTER

On February 6, 7, and 8, **Wormsloe State Historical Site** hosted the annual *Wormsloe Colonial Faire and Muster* in conjunction with the Savannah Heritage Week. Once again

Uaireigin Cu, Doannon Cu

ole **Lone Dog Lynch** attended, but not totally solomente. Lone Dog accompanied his old buddy Red Dog "Dave" Temple, who many of you know from Civil War reenactments as the artist-sutler with paintings and prints for sale. Lone Dog and Dave went up to Wormsloe on Friday morning and set up "Templetown," a lovely piece of ground under an ancient oak. We set up two tents, one for the paintings, and one for us. There were but few guests that afternoon and once set up, I piddled, and Dave went back to Brunswick to win second place at a heritage-painting contest he had entered.

That night a front blew through, and blew it did. It rained many gallons and I had to keep pushing the fly up to empty it of water. Then it got reaaaaal cold. Fortunately, we had plenty of straw for the floor, and around the sides to knock down the draft. The next day was gorgeous, but down right chilly; but it was a fine day for guests, and there were a couple of thousand or more come through the camps. Dave and Lone Dog provided periodic entertainment with a short comic skit; and while Dave attempted to sell his paintings, Lone Dog worked on targes.



Larry "Lone Dog" Lynch watches over his campsite at Wormsloe Plantation.

It was quite an event with various sutlers, a military encampment with cannon firings, an Indian camp, village, and demonstrations. It would be fine thing for Clan Am Cu to attend and really show off the colors.

THE LATEST NEWS

INDIAN SPRINGS FESTIVAL CANCELLED

The *Indian Springs Scottish Festival* has been cancelled. Much local politics & intrigue has led to the entire board of the **Butts County Historical Society** resigning. The new board apparently decided to cancel the event because it did not generate a huge income.

CLAN INVITED TO FRANKLIN, NC

Collin King has wangled an invitation for *Clan Am Cu* to attend the *Taste of Scotland* event, sponsored by the *Scottish Tartan Museum*, in Franklin N.C.

WHO'S COMING AND WHO'S NOT

The *March on London* will be repeated again this fall at *Old Bedford Village*, Pennsylvania. The event will be held Labor Day weekend, **September 4-5, 2004**. Several of you have expressed interest in returning, despite the 1800-mile round-trip.

During last year's trip, we made a presentation to the leadership of the *Army of King James* about putting together a major event here in the southeast. If we are to do this we will need the full support of the army. With the Battle of Culloden, the largest Jacobite event in the country apparently always conflicting with the *Battle of Resaca* (of which many of our clansmen make up one of the host units), our chance to become better acquainted with the northern clans is dealt a severe blow.

Last year, ten clansmen & one dependent made the trip to Bedford. In fact we had the biggest clan there. If we are ever to have any influence on the direction of the *Army of King James*, we will have to show up in force more often than once every four years. They have seen us only one other time, in 2000, when four of us went to Ohio. I will be in touch with **Chris Timm** (aka Prince Charles Edward Stuart) about what kind of turnout might be expected on the Hanoverian side. Obviously, 1800 miles is a long way to go to have only six guys to fight against.

Call Britt at 229-273-7864 or email him at bbrinson@gpstc.state.ga.us to give him your thoughts on the subject.

LATEST FROM THE WEB

Just another reminder for each of you to visit Clan Am Cu's website at www.geocities.com/clanamcu/homepage.html.

Uaireigin Cu, Doannon Cu

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"If you want a bit more Empire you don't send a bunch of Nigels. You send the Kings Own Highland Haggis flingers. 800 men in skirts, torturing appalling sounds out of an octopus, is the most fearsome site and sound known to man." - Billy Connelly

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

THE PIPER'S BAG

Several of our clansmen have expressed interest in piping over the years. The first time we went to a major Jacobite reenactment was *Culloden 2000*. The information package included guidelines for pipers that reminded them to play only period pipe tunes during the weekend. We began to wonder where to find pipe tunes of the '45. We are yet to find any CD's with period tunes on them. **Chris Timm** forwarded the first information we received, which he had gotten from a **Piperbret**. Recently, **Ken Bloom** sent some additional information.

Piperbret wrote, "If you ever listen to a piper from Nova Scotia, you will probably get a better feel as to how the pipes were probably played during the Jacobite rebellions. Some good tunes from the time are: *Lochiel's Welcome to Glasgow, Wha Saw the Forty Twa, What Wouldn't Ye Do For Charlie, Ye Jacobites By Name (actually an anti-Jacobite tune), Roses for Prince Charlie, The Girl I Left Behind Me, 100 Pipers.*"

"Many of these names are more recent but are applied to tunes that would have been folk songs of the time. Tunes such as *Scotland the Brave, Garry Owen, Atholl Highlanders* and etc., are all songs of the 20th century. It really is hard to tell without doing some digging. I will tell you this; the clans did not march to piobaireachd! They would have *marched* (the key word) to folk tunes of the times."

Ken Bloom added, "In furtherance of this and to add something that the rest of the clan might find useful, I have three books to recommend. We all know how difficult it is to find well-researched and referenced material dealing with Highlanders in the 18th century. There is a veritable sea of Scotophile nonsense out there."

"First, with regard to piping, let me recommend any of the work of **Roderick Cannon**. He is a prolific writer and he is well known to the piping community. I have found him to be a reliable source over the years. Then there is a remarkable book entitled *Traditional Gaelic Piping, 1745-1945* by **John G. Gibson**. Gibson has done a huge amount of research with primary sources and has gone a long way to explode some rather dearly held myths about the pipes and piping. His notes are extensive and complete and I think readers will find that he makes an awful lot of sense."

“**Isobel Grant** and **Hugh Cheape** are two more authors who have done a lot to put reliable information out there. Hugh is a curator at the *National Museum of Scotland*, a fine piper, and an excellent scholar. Ms. Grant is also in the museum trade and her book, *Highland Folkways*, is a treasure trove of excellent information about the customs, practices, and manners of the Highlands. The book is not great in distinguishing between the centuries but I think any intelligent reader will be able to gain a huge amount of great information from it. The copy I have was published by Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd. It goes in and out of print but is well worth the search to track it down. I found it at one of the booksellers at a Highland Games.”

“Grant and Cheape together wrote *Periods in Highland History*. Here we have two wonderful authors giving us a pretty good picture of a topic that has been beset with the fog of Romanticism. The book spends a lot of time on the 17th and 18th centuries (about a third of the book) and will give the serious enthusiast a lot of wonderful information. I found this book at **Barnes and Noble**. Amazing what you can find if you are looking.”

“All three of these books I think are important milestones in helping us with a realistic picture of what life was like, free of Victorian notions. I highly recommend them to any re-enactor looking for solid information.”

BLADES AND THINGS

Submitted by Ken Bloom

I have another book to recommend to everyone, though it may be hard to locate. It's been out of print for quite a while. It has the intriguing title of *Scottish Swords and Dirks* by **John Wallace**. It was published by Stackpole Books, as part of their *Arms and Armour* series in 1970. This thin little volume has some of the very best illustrations of dirks and is great to give you an historical perspective on the development of the dirk from the ballock dagger of the earlier periods up through the rather useless and ornamental Regimental dirks of the 19th century. This is one of the few books that actually spend some time discussing the 18th century when a dirk was a true fighting knife.

Most of them were made from broken sword blades. If a dirk blade has a fuller in it (a groove running down the length of the blade) it was probably made from an old sword blade. This groove is not a "blood groove" as some have maintained. The groove was put in to lighten the weight of the blade without sacrificing strength. One thing to look for in any good knife blade is what I call the three triangles. A properly forged blade will be basically triangular in shape in all profiles, especially when sighting down the back of the blade. Too often blades that are ground from a piece of steel are the same thickness throughout until you get to the very tip. This makes for a heavy and relatively unwieldy blade. A well-forged blade will be thickest at the hilt and then gradually taper to the point. The same can be said for the grind of the blade. Again, cheap blades will be

relatively thick from the back almost all the way to the cutting edge and then steeply ground. A good blade will taper from the back to the edge. If you examine one of those expensive cooking knives you will see this type of blade design. It makes for a nicely balanced tool, which is easy to handle. Your dirk should be the same.

Today we usually see dirks with a knife and fork in scabbard. Having additional byknives with a dirk during the 18th century was a sometime proposition. Some have none, some have one. What you don't see in the 18th century is a small knife in the sock, the sgian dhu.

Dhu in Gaelic means black. It is also an idiom for concealed. In the Wallace book there is a nice illustration of a sgian achles (armpit knife). The blade is about six inches long, triangular with a simple hilt and a bit of file work on the back of the blade. This was worn hanging from a scabbard in the armpit, hanging from the arm opening in the weskit. It was a concealed knife of last resort. Easy to get to and hopefully easy to wield. I have seen no evidence of a knife worn in the stocking top before 1822. That doesn't mean it didn't happen. It's just that I've never seen any first hand evidence of it.

The Wallace book has become a classic in the Arms and Armour trade and may be difficult and expensive to locate, but the book is well worth the effort. Highly recommended.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Culloden Highland Games. May 22-23, 2004. Culloden, Georgia. Sword & musket drills?

March On London. September 4-5, 2004. Bedford, Pennsylvania.

Highlander School of the Soldier. July, 2004? Fort King George.

