

THE HOMETOWN PUBLICATION FOR THE WORLDWIDE SCOTTISH COMMUNITY

Volume No. 1 Issue 4 Beth's Newfangled Family Tree, Section 1 September 2007

Clan Sinclair gathering on PEI attracts many to Canadian isle

Clan Sinclair recently gathered on Prince Edward Island, Canada for a four-day event which drew participants from Australia, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, California, Georgia, New Hampshire, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and throughout the Canadian Maritimes.

The group was joined by Malcolm Sinclair, the 20th Earl of Caithness, who is the hereditary chief of the Clan Sinclair and patron of the Clan Sinclair Association of Canada. He is currently a sitting member of the House of Lords in London, representing Caithness.

Close to 125 Sinclair members, including about 60 islanders with Sinclair connections attended.

Shown in the photograph at the left are Roger Sinclair, left, president of the Clan Sinclair Society of Nova Scotia, Mel Sinclair, president of the Clan Sinclair Association, USA, Malcolm Sinclair, Earl of Caithness and Rory Sinclair, president of the Clan Sinclair Association of Canada.



**Don't forget BNFT 2006-2007
Newsletter Contest!**

See complete details page 1, August BNFT

Be sure and send us news, events, happenings about your own Clan



Editor, photographer, etc.
Beth Gay, LOK, FSA Scot
<bethscribble@aol.com>
347 Rocky Knoll Rd.
Walhalla, SC 29691

Webmaster
Alastair McIntyre, KTJ, FSA Scot
<<http://www.electricscotland.com>>

Masthead Design
Tom Freeman, KR, FSA Scot
<tom@caberdancer.com>

Proofreader
Narra The Wonder Cat
<bethscribble@aol.com>
Miss Narra's Assistants
Peggie Hairy and Bicket

Miss Narra hires two new BNFT proofreading helpers

Citing a work load that has gradually eaten away her 22-hour-a-day-nap, Narra The Wonder Cat has hired two qualified feline assistants.

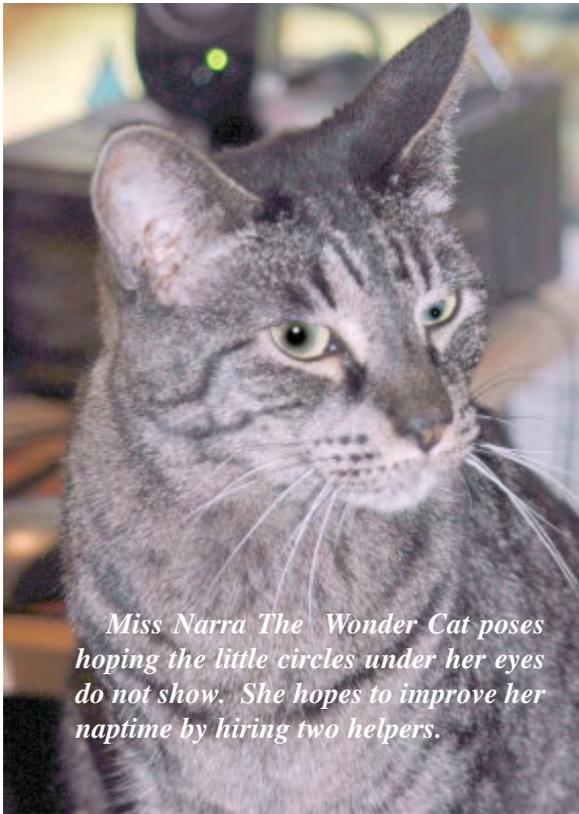
Shown below, on the left is Mr. Peggie Hairy and on the right, Mr. Bicket - the new BNFT employees.

Peggie Hairy has experience with sleeping on books, napping in the bookcase and snoozing amongst the paperback books in the living room basket.

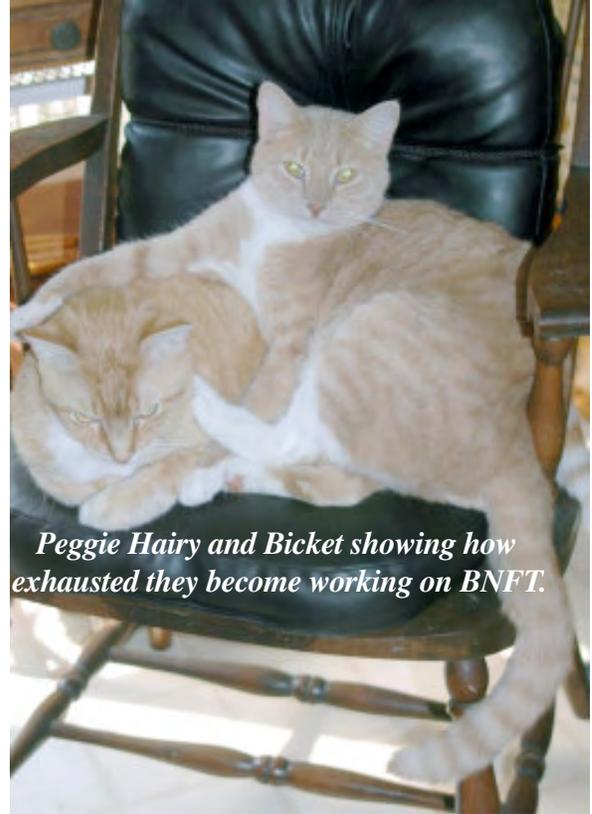
Bicket is the new "guy on the block" only having joined the family about a year ago as a wild kitten. He has worked diligently to follow Narra's example of quality reading by sitting on library books, rolling on newspapers and ripping magazines to shreds.

You can't see it, but in the photo below, there is a dictionary in the chair under the two new workers.

The two promise to follow Miss Narra's tradition of quality work, long naps and many treats.



Miss Narra The Wonder Cat poses hoping the little circles under her eyes do not show. She hopes to improve her naptime by hiring two helpers.



Peggie Hairy and Bicket showing how exhausted they become working on BNFT.

A letter from your editor: A few things to think about....

Over the past couple of games seasons, I've heard discussions about smaller crowds, less volunteer participation, less clan participation, clans who are losing membership, etc. I know of more than a few games that simply are no more.

I've had some time to think about all of this...and although you might not be particularly happy to see what I've thought...I hope you'll take a few minutes to read and then think about what you've read.

I've had occasion to try and contact some Highland Games, some clans, even businesses...some entertainers...and it turned out to be a very hard chore to actually find anyone.

These groups and individuals seem to rely on their website and/or email to be their public presence and their principle means of communicating. Many brochures, even websites, have no phone number, no way to contact a person with whom you can speak and exchange information..

I've tried leaving a message on websites - only to be "pinged" that the mailbox is full. I've tried using the email, but many times the mailbox is full or you never receive a reply. Even if you do find a phone number, the call is seldom returned.

My goodness, this publication is on the Internet and electronic media has its place. However, I promise, you may phone me, email me or write me a letter or note and I will be back to you as soon as is humanly possible.

I understand that having someone to answer the phone and talk to people is much more trouble than just leaving everything to electronics. However, could it be that this lack of human communication might prevent people from attending your event or joining your group? Could it be that potential attendees or participants just need to speak to a person? It surely doesn't hurt to try.

I'm sure this isn't the only reason for the decline in attendance at Highland Games...but it might be one of the reasons.

Years ago, I had a little list of things called "What it takes to be a champion..." The list was primarily for 4-H'ers...but I read it and remember a few of the things that I've tried ever since then to make a part of myself.

One of the things on the list was, "Always return phone



**Beth Gay, editor, *BNFT*
in Scotland 2005**

calls promptly."

Another thing I remember, although my Grandmother had already taught me this, was, "Be sure and say 'please' and 'thank you.'"

So, please think about these little things.

Thank you.

Love,

beth

Majestic America Line announces farewell celebration throughout 2008 for the legendary “Delta Queen”

Built in 1926, the Delta Queen features a steel hull and a superstructure constructed of wood – a direct reflection of the designs of her time. Subsequent Coast Guard regulations prohibited wooden superstructures, but Congress decided more than 40 years ago to provide a special exemption from these rules for the historic Delta Queen. This exemption, which Congress had extended no fewer than six occasions, is set to expire in November 2008.

For years, the Delta Queen has been a beloved fixture on the heartland rivers of the United States and provided guests with a view of America from the waters that shaped the country’s expansion. The Delta Queen provides a wholly unique way to experience the great American communities, cultures and experiences along the Upper and Lower Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Arkansas, Black Warrior and Cumberland rivers, as well as the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway.

In 1970, recognized as the last operational steam paddlewheeler with overnight accommodations plying the rivers, the Delta Queen was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1989, she was designated as a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of Interior. She was inducted into the National Maritime Hall of Fame in 2004.

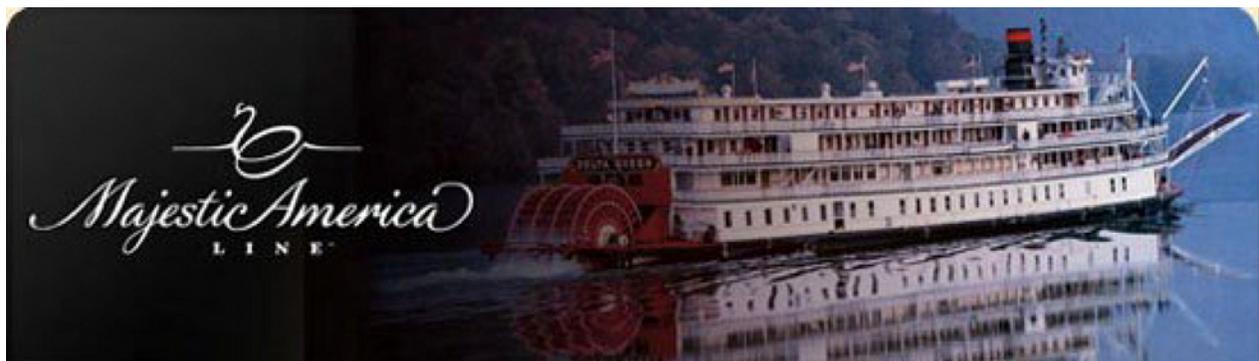
A veteran of World War II and the only steamboat to transit the Panama Canal, the 80 year-old Delta Queen was host to three U.S. presidents and a princess. Stars of stage, screen and the entertainment world have also graced her decks, as well as some of the most prominent business leaders and statesmen of our time.

The ship itself is rich with art and antiques such as original Tiffany-style stained glass windows, rich hardwood paneling, gleaming brass fittings, the only Siamese ironwood floor aboard a steamboat, the dramatic and often-photographed Grand Staircase, an 1897 steam calliope, and the very same ship’s bell that sounded out landings for the steamboat that Mark Twain rode downriver in 1883.

Majestic America Line will dedicate the 2008 season to celebrating the Delta Queen’s 80 years of service and her fabled time on the river.

Majestic America Line is planning special commemorative events, exclusive departures for previous Delta Queen guests and commemorative gifts that will mark the farewell season. With just 24 departures on the Delta Queen during 2008, guests are encouraged to reserve their place in history soon. To find out more about traveling on the Delta Queen, please contact judy@judysctt.com, or call 404-378-1080

FREE Roundtrip airfare on select 2008 Mississippi region sailings of *The American Queen, Mississippi Queen and Delta Queen* of 7 nights or longer if booked by 31 October 2007. Contact Judy for details.



Tourist? Traveler? Touron?



**Marti Van Horne,
Scots Travel Specialist**

Last month we talked about traveling as a tourist so let's look at how a traveler might approach a trip to Scotland. Unlike Antarctica, Borneo or other exotic destinations where you can encounter lots of challenges Scotland is a wonderfully easy way to test your mettle as a traveler. No language problems, well maybe in Glasgow, no culture shock and friendly natives make for a wonderful adventure. Don't worry about running into tourons (tourist + moron) as this is too much for them.

First things first, pack light; it's almost a cliché but if you have ever schlepped your own bags along uneven pavement or in the rain you will come to love your backpack and some now even sport wheels. Unless you are in the wilderness you can find a coin laundry in most small towns. Sturdy, waterproof boots and rain gear are musts. Since you will be handling your own luggage on public transportation you should bring only what you can manage yourself. If you are

renting a car or caravan, aka camper, you can adjust accordingly. If you want to walk, ramble or check out the Munros, go to www.walking.visitscotland.com for almost everything you will need to know to have a well organized and enjoyable trip.

Getting around Scotland is fairly easy. If you're renting a car the best value is going to be an economy with standard shift. It does not take long to acclimate to driving on the left and shifting with the left hand or navigating single track roads. If you are flying into Glasgow or Edinburgh use public transportation while staying there. A car in the city is a parking problem waiting to happen and daily parking rates are high; few hotels in the city provide free parking. If you stay at a B&B on the outskirts just be sure it's on a bus line or you can check out park and ride services provided in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Perth. Autoeurope, www.autoeurope.com allows you to compare rates for several companies. It's a good idea to get collision and theft protection if your own auto insurance policy will not cover a foreign rental. There is usually no charge to pick the car up on one city and drop it in another.

There are numerous options for bus travel. If you are originating in England or Wales you can use the National Express www.nationalexpress.com to get to the larger cities in Scotland. Once in Scotland you can use Scottish Citylink with service to over 200 cities and towns. Check out www.citylink.co.uk for schedules, fares, ticket discounts and money saving passes. All rates are quoted in Pounds and dates should be put in with the day first, then the month. For a real look at rural life consider traveling on the Postbus www.royalmail.com/postbus. For a fee you can travel on the bus delivering mail to areas where there is no other form of public transportation and get a glimpse of Scotland that tourists never see.

Rail travel is limited to cities on the main lines www.britrail.com but it can be coordinated with bus

Continued on page 6

Marti Van Horne, *Continued from page 5*

and ferry services to make a journey to more outlying areas; see www.traveline.org.uk. The Freedom of Scotland Travelpass gives unlimited travel on rail, bus and even Caledonian McBrayne scheduled ferry services. Passes can be purchased for any 4 days out of 8 consecutive days or 8 out of 15 days. Scenic rides such as The West Highland Line through Ft. William to Mallaig and the route from Sirling to Kyle of Lochalsh offer outstanding scenery that

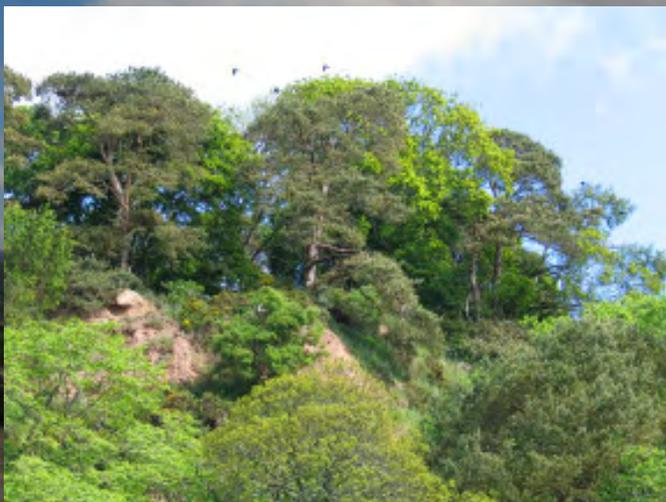
would be missed if you are concentrating on driving. If the end of the line ends at a ferry crossing, check ferry schedules first.

Now you can figure out where you want to go. Next month we'll take look at ferry information as I'm sure you'll want to explore at least some of the 130 islands off the Scottish coast.

We will also consider how to find accommodations for your stay.

Email martiinnc@aol.com with your ideas and experiences, just put BNFT in the header so I'll know it's not junk.

Great photos are easy in Scotland. Just point the camera and push the little button. It is gorgeous everywhere!



Seaside Highland Games



**October 12th,
13th & 14th, 2007**

At Seaside Park in
Ventura, California

GAMES EVENTS:

Scottish Heavy Athletics, Pipe Band Competition, Solo Piping Competition, Highland & Irish Step Dancing, Scottish Country Dancing, Gathering of the Clans, Vendors, Children's Glen, British Classic Cars, Genealogy, Drummond Ranch Dogs, Arts and Crafts...And Haggis!

ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS:

**WHISKY TASTING AND
"A SCOTTISH EVENING"
AND FASHION SHOW**

Friday Evening, Oct. 12th at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel

Classes:

Whisky Seminar Ray Pearson	Genealogy Beth Gay Speaking Gaelic
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EVENT SCHEDULE

Friday	5:00pm	Whisky Tasting
	6:30pm	"A Scottish Evening"
Saturday	9:00am	Gates Open
	Noon	Grand Parade & Opening Ceremonies
	8:00pm	Alasdair Fraser and Alex Beaton
Sunday	9:30am	Kirkin' o' the Tartans
	4:30pm	Closing Ceremonies

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For the latest entertainment schedule and more event information

CONTACT: John & Nellie at (818) 886-4968,
e-mail: SeasideChief@aol.com

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Whisky Tasting: \$25
Scottish Evening: \$30

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Available

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Allowed In
Seaside Park**



Looking for your family? Here they are! *Contact them now!*

Clan Macneil Association of America

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Macneil, MacNeil, Macniel, MacNiel, Macneill, MacNeill, MacNeillie, Macneal, MacNeal, Macneale, MacNeale, MacNeilage, Macneilage, MacNelly, Macnelly, MacNeally, Macneally, Mcneil, McNeil, Mcniel, McNiel, Mcneill, McNeill, Mcneal, McNeal, Mcneale, McNeale, McNeilage, Mcneilage, McNelly, McNelly, McNeally, Mcneally, Neil, Neal, Neall, Neale, Neill, Niel, Niell, O'Neal, O'Neil, O'Niel, O'Neill, Oneil, Oneill, Nelson, Neilson, Nielson, MacGugan, Macgugan, MacGrail, Macgrail, MacGugan, Macgugan, MacGuigan, Macguigan, McGugan, Mogugan, McGrail, McGrail, Mograil, Mograil, McGugan, Macgugan, McGuigan, Mcguigan



President C. McNeill Baker, Jr.
6959 Almours Dr.
Jacksonville, FL 32117-2628
clanmacneil.net



Clan Graham Society

If you are a Graham or Sept of Graham, you are cordially invited to share in a proud and noble heritage.

For application, write:

CLAN GRAHAM SOCIETY
Norris Graham
PO Box 70
Yucca, AZ 06438-0070
www.clan-graham-society.org



Clan Skene Association, Inc.

Invites membership from Skene and septs Carison, Carney/Carnie, Currehill, Dyce, Dyer, Hall, Halyard/Hallyard, MacGalliard, Rennie and Skains.

Robert J. Skeens,

2 VP & Membership Chairman
1705 Woodruff Street
Bethany, MO 64224
Email: rjskeens@grm.net

CLAN DAVIDSON SOCIETY, USA
Michael W. Davidson, President
235 Fairmont Drive Phone: 336-838-3850
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CLAN MACKINNON SOCIETY
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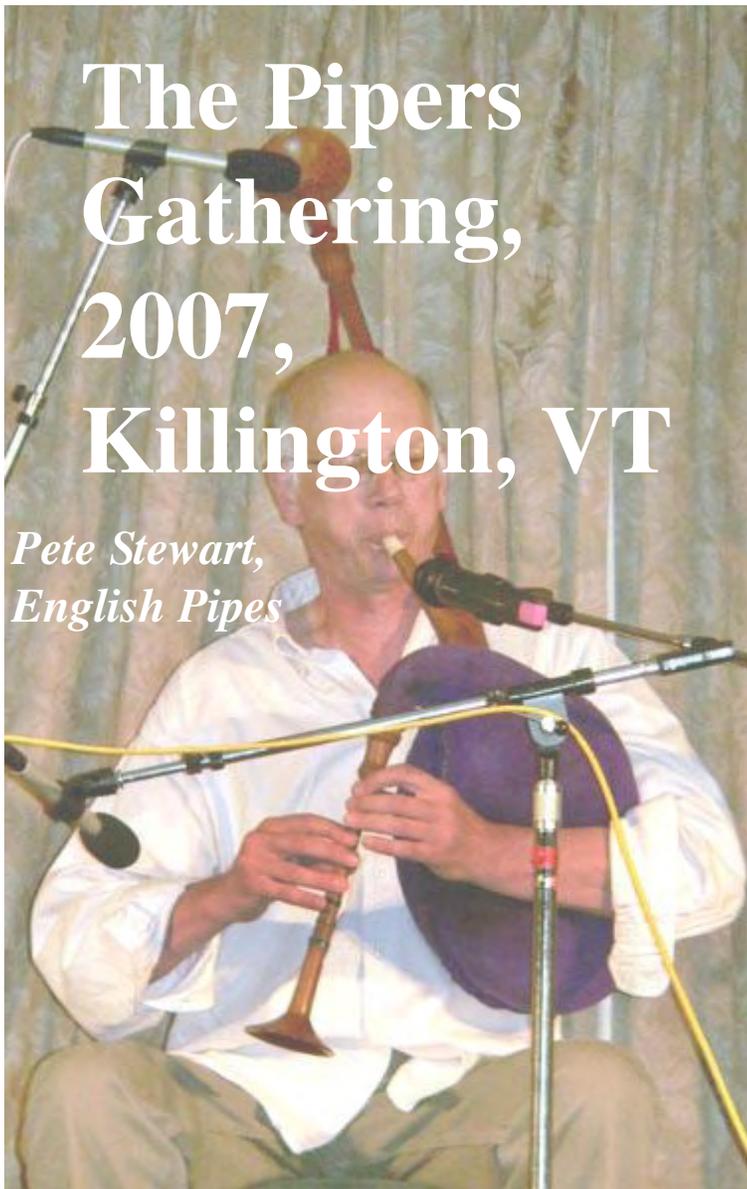
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oakknollfarm@hotmail.com.

The Pipers Gathering, 2007, Killington, VT

*Pete Stewart,
English Pipes*



If you love “alternative bagpipe music,” you’ll love The Pipers’ Gathering held each August in Killington, Vermont.

When you hear the word, “bagpipe,” most people think of the Great Highland Bagpipe. The Pipers’ Gathering features all of the OTHER bagpipe types found in the British Isles and Europe. That includes the Northumbrian Smallpipes, Scottish Smallpipes, Irish uilleann pipes, Border pipes and many different varieties of the English bag-

Continued on page 10



*Deb
Quigley,
Irish
Uilleann
Pipes*

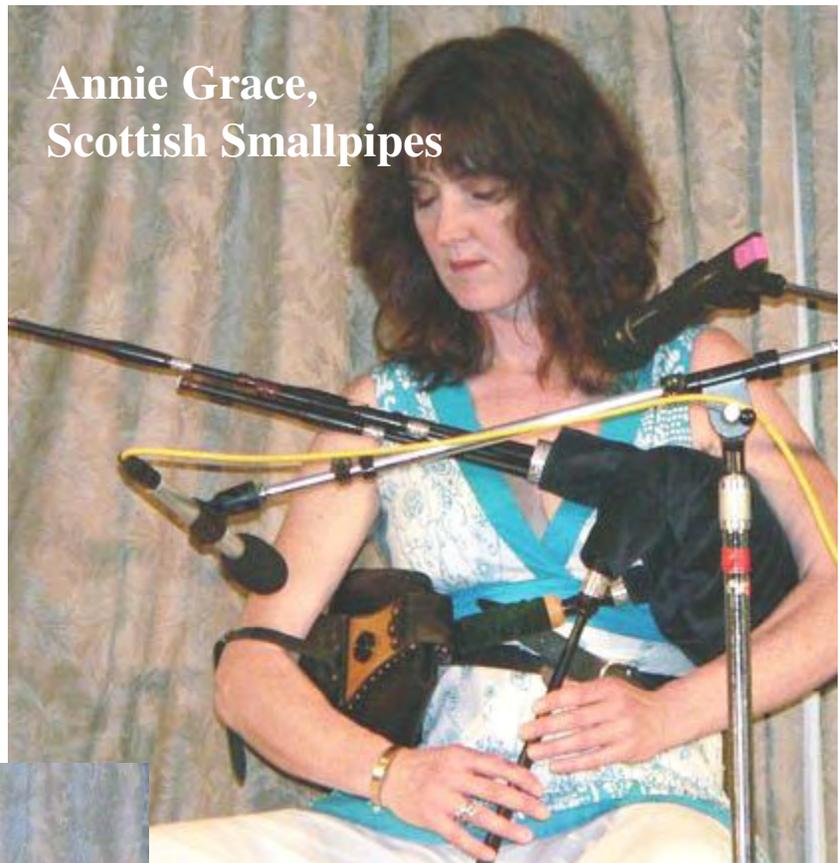
The Pipers' Gathering,

Continued from page 9

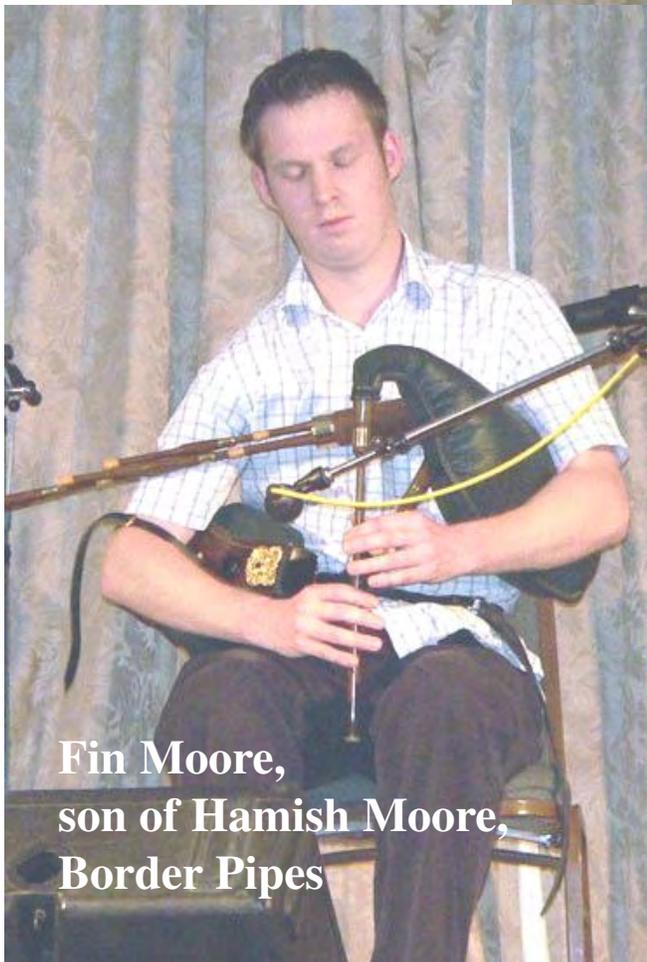
pipes. Participants are exposed to the broad spectrum of fascinating instruments and the equally interesting people who play them and make them.

You'll find some of the finest pipemakers in the world. The Pipers' Gathering is the place to go if you've ever thought about playing something other than the Great Pipes...or, if you'd just like to enjoy the sounds made by the masters of these lesser known instruments.

You can also find supplies, music books, CDs, cassette tapes and more.



**Annie Grace,
Scottish Smallpipes**



**Fin Moore,
son of Hamish Moore,
Border Pipes**

This year, the event was held August 10-13 and began with an informal ceilidh. There are hands-on piping classes on Saturday and Saturday and Sunday afternoons feature mini-concerts, demonstrations, special workshops and discussions. There are ongoing traditional Irish sessions and spontaneous jamming. Evening concerts feature some of the best pipers in the world!

This was the 22nd year of The Pipers' Gathering. At first it was held in Hero, Vermont - an idea of Alan Jones.

By 1998, the event had grown into a major piping program and moved to the grounds of the Shore Acres Motel. In 2005, the committee announced that the gathering would be held for the first time in Killington, VT.

If you'd like more information visit <http://www.info@pipersgathering.org>

With many thanks to my old friend, Peggy Brewster.



Be sure and
see our

Time Travel

photo essay
in Section 2
of this
BNFT
issue

- * Suppliers of tartan fabrics and apparel
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Jacksonville Genealogical Society sets meeting date for September 15, 2007

The Jacksonville Genealogical Society, will hold their monthly meeting September 15, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. at the Webb-Wesconnett Branch Library, 6887 103rd St., Jacksonville, Fl. We are pleased to have as our speaker, Mr. James "Craig" Morris, a native of Jacksonville, whose topic is "Genealogy and the War for Southern Independence." He will discuss the war at it relates to Jacksonville and Northeast Florida. For additional information please contact Mary Chauncey at (904) 781-9300.



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A letter to the Clan Commander from John Rosser, President Clan MacDuffee on the happenings at the 2007 Grandfather Mountain Highland Games



Commander Sandy,

Grandfather Mountain Highland Games Saturday's weather could not have been better! There was a big crowd, and some additional McDuffie family contacts were made!

Brother/Sister team of Marianne Clayton and Gordon James won the prize of traveling the greatest distance to join the family, theirs beginning in British Columbia! I think they have had a grand vacation!

Your welcoming letter was read aloud as the start of our Annual Meeting. Thank you for your support!

Commissioner Bruce shared memories of past President William Coleman. Commissioner Bruce and with his lovely wife, Winnie, were presented with a gift in recognition of their many years of support and service to the Clan. Vice President Jerry McDuffie is being sent on a mission to present Cousins Fritz and Bettye with a gift as an expression of thanks for all their years of leadership!

Cousin David Nathan McDuffie gave an excellent presentation of the McDuffie DNA Project, lead by Rod McDuff, and the results to date of the 90+ samples analyzed so far. Everyone voice their support to encourage more participation in the study. Vice President Bill Morris shared that your DNA sample, as well as our friend, Dr. Jim McAfee's, show you to be a descendant of one of the original McDuffies! Glad to have the documentation! This

is fun!

Financially, we are in good shape, having income greater than our expenses! True to our Scottish ancestry! I'll scan a copy of the David's report to share with you this week.

With the election of officers, we used the old Quaker tradition of building consensus, and the result was Cousin David Nathan McDuffie, Treasurer; Cousin Marty Rosser, Secretary; Cousins William Morris and Jerry McDuffie, Vice Presidents, and I am to be the President. Here's hoping this leadership team meets with your approval!

Time on Saturday was spent with Dr. Archie McAfee in the Macfie tent. Cousin Dr. Archie invited the MacDuffie's to join in the Parade of the Tartans this morning, and we shall, carrying our MacDuffie banner as a show of force on behalf of the family! At our Annual Meeting we discussed how we could collaborate more in the future as a Clan, not just a Clan Society. Commissioner Bruce seemed pleased.

Well, the sun is up, so it is time to prepared for another day on top of Grandfather Mountain! Here's hoping that you and Helen are well!

Your obedient servant,

John Rosser

President

MacDuffie Clan Society of America Inc.

35TH ANNIVERSARY 2007

STONE MOUNTAIN HIGHLAND GAMES & SCOTTISH FESTIVAL

2007 DATES

OCTOBER 20TH & 21ST

Attend "The Friendly
Games."

Meet your fellow clansmen and celebrate the 34th Anniversary games along with our Honored guests and many old friends who will gather in this picturesque setting so rich in heritage.

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October 20th & 21st, 2007
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Stone Mountain Park Meadow

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- Scottish Dancing
- Scottish Harping & Fiddling
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A few Game Faces!



Be sure and see Father, Son & Friends in person! Their upcoming schedule:

Piqua Heritage Festival September 1 - September 3 Piqua, OHIO Performance Times - Saturday 4:30p....Sunday 12:30p and 2:30p....Monday 1p....would love to see you there.

Fort Loudoun September 8 - September 9 Venor, TENNESSEE Great site and great people. Jeff and his entire staff do a great job putting this on. We love to swim in the lake after a hot day.

Tiffin Heritage Festival September 15 - September 16 Tiffin, OHIO Another great heritage festival this time in northern Ohio. These people are wonderful. Germans rule.

Mississinewa 1812 October 5 - October 7 Marion , INDIANA Marion Indiana is host to one of the largest War of 1812 events in the country. Great event.

Feast of the Hunters Moon October 12 - October 13 West Lafayette, INDIANA The fest was my first event as a kid. This is always a hoot. I don't recover as well as I used to from this one.

Locust Grove October 27 - October 28 Louisville , KENTUCKY GREAT SITE. These people are real pros the entire staff of Locust Grove are the BEST. Take some time to tour this place and look at the surrounding neighborhood. AWESOME!!!

Beavers Bend Folk Festival November 10 - November 11 Broken Bow , OKLAHOMA WE MISSED THESE GUYS. Michelle and Doug do a great job with the details. Probably one of the most beautiful places on earth!

FAN APPRECIATION CONCERT November 24 - November 24 Tipp City, OHIO GET YOUR TICKET REQUESTS IN NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! THEY ARE GOING FAST. told that we were sold out. GET YOUR TICKETS EARLY THEY ARE GOING

16th Annual International Gathering of the Clan Macfie hosts more than 150

The 16th annual International Gathering of the Clan Macfie in early July drew crowd of more than 150 . The event was hosted by the host Clan Society, The Thorburn-Macfie Family Society of Sweden and ran in conjunction with that Society's regular Triennial Family Reunion.

Visitors were from Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand, the USA and Holland.

There were four days of activities for the group.

Formed in 1937, the Thorburn-Macfie Family Society commemorates the arrival in Sweden in 1823 of William Thorburn and his wife, Jessie Macfie, from Scotland. Their descendants prospered and very much remained in Sweden to form this strong group of "locals" acknowledging their Scottish roots.

Although Thorburn is the dominant surname line within the Family Society, several other Macfies came to Sweden in the early days and their descen-

dants remain today, all being proud of their Scottish heritage.

If you would like information on the Clan Macfie, please contact Clan Commander A.C. "Sandy" MacPhie, 76 Lindeman Avenue, Heatley, Townsville, Q. 4814 Australia. You may also visit their homepage on the Internet: <http://www.clanmacfiehomepage.org>

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Bob and Doreen Browning



GENEALOGY

The Key To Success In Genealogy: Developing A Plan



10 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Saturday, September 29

Saturdays, October 6, 13, 20, 27

**Registration
Required**

Session 1: *Developing a Research Plan*

Identify what you know about ancestors. What additional facts are needed?

Session 2: *Locating Information*

Identify local and long distance resources, including Internet resources.

Session 3: *Organizing Information & Documenting Sources*

Session 4: *Genealogy Clinic*

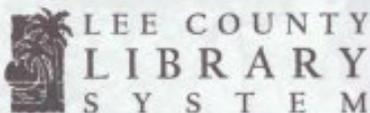
An informal research day held in the genealogy area, providing opportunities for participants to utilize the collection and receive help with research problems.

Session 5: *Analyzing YOUR data*

Place your ancestors in their proper historical and social context.

Workshops will combine lectures with interactive sessions to help genealogists trace their family history. Participants should bring to class at least a partially completed 5 generation chart and a family group sheet on one family. Participants needing assistance with either form should contact Bryan L. Mulcahy at **479-4651** for a pre-class consultation. See the Lee County Genealogical Society website at **www.LeeCountyGenealogy.org** for additional information concerning consultations and times.

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So, what do you mean by “Highland Dancing”??

Kay McKinnon LaRue

“No, it’s NOT *Riverdance!*” If you’ve ever been involved in Highland Dancing, chances are you have said that to those not familiar with our Scottish art form of dancing.

For those of you who are curious as to what you may have seen at our Highland Games, I hope this gives you a wee bit of useful information to make it more enjoyable to watch!

Riverdance, of course, is Irish but the Scots have their own form of dancing very different from what you see on PBS.

For one, the Scots actually use their arms when they dance and, at least in competition, there are very specific steps that must be precisely performed. Second, the costumes worn are as much a part of the dance as are the steps themselves.

Let’s start there.

When you watch dancers, they generally are wearing a kilt, hose, jacket or vest and the ever present soft leather “ghillies” (dance shoes).

Ghillie, by the way, is a Gaelic term for a servant.

In the days of yore, when the lairds or noblemen discarded their shoes, they ripped out the tongue (making them less valuable) and gave them to their servants to use. This is why the shoes worn today for dancing and pipe bands

have no tongues!

The tartans used for the dancer’s kilts are entirely of their own choosing. While they can wear a tartan from any Clan, Family or District they like, they will usually choose a sett that is large and has more white in the pattern. This is “flashier” and the kilt swing shows better in front of the judges.

There are at least a hundred different “dance tartans” available to choose from. This can be one of the most exciting and difficult choices a dancer makes! A kilt is normally custom made for the dancer and is very expensive. The good thing about a kilt is that it can be made to “grow” with the dancer (at least to a point) so you don’t need to get a new one very often. It is important that the dancer chooses their tartan carefully as they could be wearing it for several years!

A black or matching colored velvet vest or jacket is worn by girls and boys can wear a black or colored doublet such as a Prince Charles or Montrose.

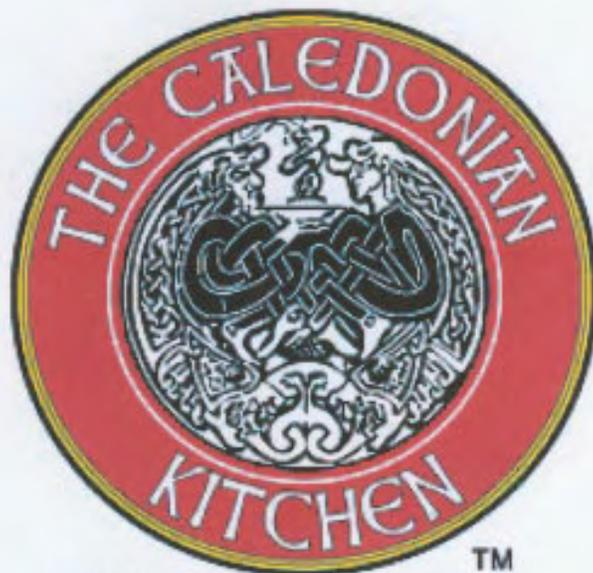
The hose must be of the same tartan as the kilt, although, in the lower levels of dancing, (Primary, Beginner and Novice) a white sock may be worn, in-



stead.

Boys will also wear a Glengarry or Balmoral

Continued on page 23



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Highland Dancing, *Continued from page 21*

Cap and a sporran. They may not wear a Sgian Dubh (small sock knife) while dancing but they must wear underwear! No “going regimental” allowed!!

Another costume you may see on a female dancer is a white dress or Aboyne costume. These are worn for “National Dances” (more on those later). Again, it is the dancer’s choice to wear either the white dress with a tartan plaid over her shoulder or the Aboyne costume consisting of a white blouse and velvet “petal” vest and a tartan skirt with a matching tartan plaid over the shoulder.

Boys can still wear the kilt or they can choose to wear tartan “trews”, instead.

There are a few other costumes worn for specific dances such as the Sailor’s Hornpipe and the Irish Jig.

The hornpipe costume is a sailor’s pants and top complete with the big square collar in back with stripes and an authentic Regulation British Navy cap.

The Jig costume is a red and/or green dress with a white apron and instead of the familiar ghillies, hard soled Jig shoes with “jingles” in the heels are worn.

Dancers are required to have their hair pulled away from the face, and if long enough, it is pulled into a bun on top of their head with no ribbons or adornments allowed.

We just like them to show off their beautiful Scottish faces and smiles rather than their hair!!

Highland dances, except for reels, were traditionally done by men. In fact, it is still a very big part of present day Highland regiments.

In the US Army, you see lots of pushups and jumping jacks for conditioning.

In the Highland service, everyone is expected to learn dancing as a part of their conditioning and any

Highland dancer today will tell you it is quite a workout!

Some of these dances actually came out of the days of warfare, such as the familiar Highland Fling, the Sword Dance and Barracks Johnnie.

Women did not begin dancing the men’s Highland dances until about a hundred years ago. Today the ratio is about 95% girls to 5% boys.

The National dances were originally women’s dances and were balletic and graceful rather than the more athletic Highland dances. This was due to the influence of the French court on their Scottish friends. Most of the National dances originated in the Hebrides off the west coast of Scotland.

There are many different steps to each of the dances. Generally, each dance has some required steps and some steps of the dancers (or teachers) choice.

You may be watching a competition and see different steps being done at the same time by the 3 dancers that are being judged! This is simply a preference and is perfectly acceptable to do. I certainly commend those judges for being able to watch all those different steps at the same time and keep track of what is done correctly and what is not!

The only time there are 100% required steps is during the annual USIR National Competition (which, by the way, was in Irvine, California this year- July 25-29th). As I had stated earlier, unlike the Irish dances, we Scots use our arms. Many times you will see one or both arms held over the head with the thumb and middle fingers pressed together and the other three fingers held straight up. This represents the head and antlers of the Highland stag. This

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Highland Dancing, *Continued from page 23*

is only done during Highland dances, not during a National dance.

Watch for the bow before and after every Highland dance.

All subjects of the King were required to bow before their monarch so each dancer bows to show respect as expected. However, you may note that while bowing, they keep their head and eyes up. Every good Scot knows who the monarch is but that doesn't mean that they necessarily trust him! They're certainly going to keep their eyes on him!!

The judges are going to look for several things. Proper position of the leg, foot, arms and head, pointed toes, strength and height in the leaps, good or proper posture, and every dancer's nemesis – the dreaded “turnout”. They must also be on the ball of their foot almost the entire time – don't put those heels down! (can you say shin splints??).

The dancers do not get extra points for doing more difficult steps. A judge would much rather see a something danced simple and beautiful than difficult and poorly.

How their costume fits and shows is just as important.

The kilt should be aligned and swing properly, not be too long or too short, no droopy hose, well fitted jackets or vests and no flopping shoelaces! Now it's time to explain a little about each dance.....

The Highland Fling

Probably the most recognizable of all Scottish dances is the “Fling”.

This is a solo dance from as early as 1824, though many of the steps are from a much earlier time. The Fling is the only dance that is danced “on the spot”, with no forward, backward or sideways travel. A good dancer stays in one spot throughout

the dance – very difficult to do! Some say this was a victory dance, by a Highland warrior, done on his round “targe” or shield. The fingers of the dancers held over the head and the quick movements of the feet mimic the Red Stag running and leaping through the Highlands.

The Sword Dance (Ghille Callum)

This is one of the most exciting dances to watch and probably the oldest dance, originating in the 12th century.



Legend has it that Malcom Canmore (King of the Scots) defeated one of MacBeth's generals in battle and in celebration, laid his sword over that of his opponent and triumphantly danced over the crossed swords. Later this dance was often danced before a battle and if the warrior could complete the dance without touching the sword, it was seen as a good omen.

In today's competitions, if the dancer displaces or even touches the sword while dancing, he or she is disqualified. You might notice that the dancers themselves are turning clockwise but they are moving counter

clock-wise around the swords. This is thought to be a subtle way of wishing ill-luck on the other competitors as folklore says that to do something “wrong ways around” was a sort of curse!

Initially, the dancers dance in one complete circle around the outside of the swords. This is called “addressing the swords”. Once around, the dancers then move “into the swords” and new steps are performed with the last set of steps done in double time. It can be pretty intimidating for them to be dancing so close to the swords, especially those large hilts!

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Seann Truibhas

Gaelic for “old trousers”, this dance commemorates the Scots love of their kilt. After the Battle of Culloden in 1746, the British banned many parts of highland life including the wearing of the kilt but the law was lifted some 30 years later. The beginning part of this dance shows the dancer trying to shake off the despised trousers (trews). Midway through the dance, the dancer claps, the music goes to double time and the joy and freedom of wearing the kilt once again is celebrated.

Strathspey and Reel of Tulloch Strathspey and Highland Reel

The various reels are among the oldest and most popular of the Highland dances. They are the only ones where the dancers actually dance with each other, although they are still judged individually. It always requires 4 people to do these dances.

The Reel of Tulloch is believed to have its origins in the Aberdeenshire village of Tulloch. On a wintry Sunday, as the congregation waited for the minister to arrive, the villagers were trying to keep warm and began dancing and clapping in the aisles, swinging each other with linked arms. You will notice that the dancers keep in a straight line – as if in the narrow aisles of a church.

The Highland Reel is closely related to the reels brought to this country by Scottish immigrants in the Appalachians and later developed into the familiar Virginia Reel, square dancing and clogging.

Barracks Johnnie

The full name of this dance is “Wilt Thou Go

to the Barracks, Johnnie?” and is said to be a recruiting dance from the 17th and 18th centuries.

A recruiting detail from a Highland regiment would set up in town on market day and try to get men to enlist.

Remember, Highland dancing was very much admired as masculine pursuit. Today there are many performances of Highland Dancing done by the Scottish regiments traveling around the world. If one comes to your town, you owe it to yourself to buy a ticket and enjoy the show!

Highland Laddie

This is a Hebridean step dance dating from the 1700s. It is danced to a tune also called the *Highland Laddie* and is a song of the Jacobite rebellion. The laddie is referring to either Charles Stewart or his grandson, Bonnie Prince Charlie.

The above dances are collectively called Highland dances and are always danced in the kilt. The following dances, while obviously danced in the Highlands as well as other parts of Scotland, are known as National dances and a different costume is worn.

The Scottish Lilt

The Lilt is a step dance, usually one of the first National dances a beginner learns. It is thought to have been composed in Perthshire about 1746 and handed down from teacher to teacher through the years. It is also thought to have been developed for women so they could have a dance of their own, as they weren't allowed to do men's dances.

Flora MacDonald's Fancy

Also one of the first dances to be taught to be-

Continued on page 26



Highland Dancing, *Continued from page 25*

ginner, this was created to honor Flora MacDonald who helped Bonnie Prince Charles escape to Skye dressed as her maid. The Prince fled to France and Flora was imprisoned in the Tower of London for this but eventually released.

Blue Bonnets

Another Hebridean step dance and seems to be especially suited to women. The name comes from Sir Walter Scot's poem, "All the Blue Bonnets Have Gone Over the Border". The bonnets referred to here are the woolen tams commonly worn by many Scottish men, usually dyed blue. It is a bit of a flirting dance! The dance moves forward and back as if teasing the men and the body and arms are turned so that it appears the ladies are peeking through her arms!

Village Maid

Another solo step dance from Aberdeenshire dating from about 1816. While all of the other dances require the dancer to be on the ball of their foot throughout, this is the only one does not. A nice break, indeed! It is a very simple, graceful dance emphasizing leg position and, like Blue Bonnets, asks the dancer to be a bit of a flirt!

These next two dances are usually referred to as "character dances". They have their own costumes as described earlier and are some of the most favorite to watch and for the dancer to do.

Irish Jig

Said to be a Scottish tongue-in-cheek version of the Irish jig.

There are two versions of the story, the first being that of an angry housewife whose clean laundry has been knocked down into the dirt by children playing under the clothesline. The other is of a wife waiting for her husband to come home from work with his pay packet, but he has stopped off at the local pub for a few pints.

In either case, the dance portrays a lot of emotion with plenty of fist pumping and foot stomping!

The heels of the hard soled shoes worn in the dance have jingles in them to help emphasize her opinion.

Boys will do this dance dressed similar to a Leprechaun and carrying a Shillelagh. They are not, of course, portraying an angry housewife so their steps are very different.

Sailor's Hornpipe

This dance has its origins in the centuries old dances done in the British Navy to the playing of a hornpipe, similar to a pennywhistle.

They were simple instruments, popular with sailors because they were small and easy to carry in a pocket.

There are many, many steps for the dancer to choose from so you may see a wide variety in any given competition.

They generally depict life on board a ship such as hauling up an anchor, hoisting cargo, looking out to sea, or walking on a rolling deck. Some even show a drunken sailor or one hanging from the yard-arms!

You may note that the dancers keep their hands flat and palms held away from the body – this is meant to show them trying to keep their uniform clean. There is one point, however, that the dancer slaps the thigh to show them wiping tar and pitch off of their hands.

There are more dances that are occasionally done but these are the most common you might see in a competition. There are also times when a choreography competition is included. This gives the dancers a chance to be creative and do something entirely different – different music, different steps, different costumes – as long as the music and steps are decidedly Celtic in look and feel. They can also do duets or group numbers.

Hopefully, you have found this to be helpful and will make watching a dance competition or performance more enjoyable. Every dancer loves to hear applause and they enjoy answering questions so if you get the chance – ask away!!!





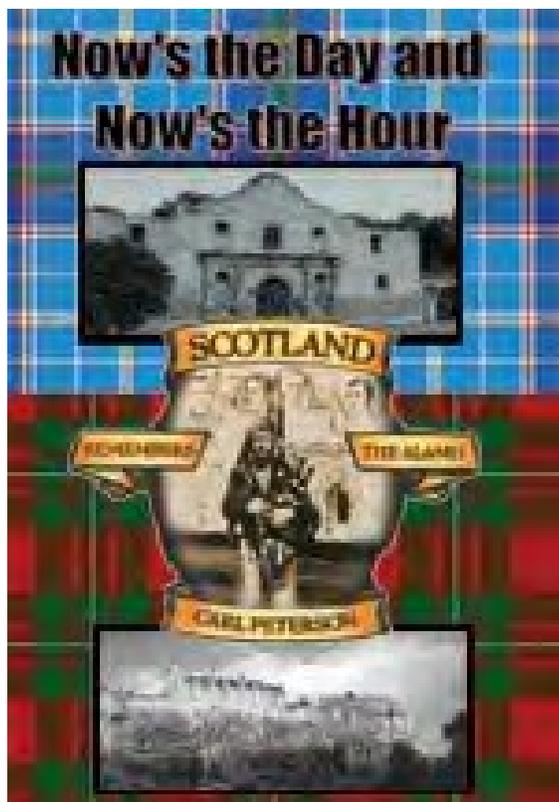
Dream Catcher Publishing, Inc.

3260 Keith Bridge Road #313
Cumming, GA 30041
Phone: 404-486-7703
FAX: 888-771-2800
DCP@DreamCatcherPublishing.net

Carl Peterson

Author of *Now's the Day Now's the Hour*

was born in Greenock Scotland on the banks of the River Clyde. He emigrated to Canada before coming south to the USA. An entertainer and singer, he has performed in every province of Canada and every state of the USA, except Alaska. He has appeared on national TV and once hosted his own radio program. As a folksinger one naturally becomes an historian, Carl combines history and music in his performances and in his writing.



Now's the Day Now's the Hour

Carl Peterson

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*The Gathering Edinburgh 2009,
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The Gathering will take the form of an international clan gathering and the largest highland games ever held in Scotland, and will be one of the key events of Homecoming Scotland. This spectacular event will be made even more unique with a special clan parade on the Royal Mile culminating in a commemorative Clan Pageant on the magnificent esplanade of Edinburgh Castle. It is hoped that all clan and Scottish associations will attend, to celebrate Scotland's rich history and cultural traditions.

**For further details please go to
www.thegathering2009.com**

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THE GATHERING EDINBURGH

August 2007

2009

Welcome to the first newsletter of The Gathering 2009, this monthly newsletter will keep you up to date on all the developments in the preparations of the event. We will provide all the information you will need to know to make your visit to The Gathering, Edinburgh and Scotland in 2009 as stress-free, memorable and entertaining as possible.



The Gathering 2009 is being held in Holyrood Park on 25th and 26th July 2009. It aims to be the largest international gathering of the clans ever held, and is one of the signature events of the Homecoming Scotland initiative. The Gathering will take the form of a classic highland games and will feature a clan parade up the Royal Mile followed by a unique commemorative clan pageant to be held on the Edinburgh Castle esplanade.

Newsflash

Following the AGM of the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs (SCSC) we now have the full support of the SCSC and an important development has taken place in which the SCSC will host a clan convention on Friday 24th July 2009. The audience for this event will be Clan Chiefs and senior clan association representatives. Additionally there will be a ballot for a number of additional tickets to this event in 2008.

Website launch

The Gathering 2009 official website will be launched in October 2007. The website will be full of information about the event and will develop more details over the following months. The website will also have a forum and blog, as well as downloadable podcasts and lots of fantastic footage of Edinburgh and Scotland.

Tickets to The Gathering 2009 will go on sale in early 2008, although we will be taking reservations in late 2007 through the website and forms distributed worldwide. Applications for clan tents will be available from Oct 2007, please fill in the online form to apply. More detailed information will follow in September.

--Continued on page 30

The Flower of Scotland won 41% of Scottish vote for National Anthem!

The Gathering, continued from page 29

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Travel and Accommodation

On our website we will be listing information about travel and accommodation within Scotland. This will detail the hotels with room allocations and special room rates specifically for The Gathering and how you can book direct with these hotels. We will also list a number of tour specialists who can book your entire holiday from beginning to end. This will therefore allow you to make your travel plans well in advance to make sure you don't miss out!

Support

We are very grateful to everyone who has offered to promote the event around the world and the work that has been done to date. At this stage the most important support we can receive from you is that you send this newsletter out to all your friends, colleagues and family who you think would be interested in the event. They will then be able to register online for our regular newsletter and updates about the event.



The team here at the Gathering is comprised of Lord Jamie Sempill, Jenny Gilmour and Lucy-Rose Walker. We would love to hear your stories about your connection to Scotland and your plans to attend The Gathering.

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In 2009, The "Year of Homecoming"
in Scotland will also feature
The 250th anniversary celebrations of the
birth of Robert Burns.

We'll have more information all year, now til then.