



# VERITAS

## the Clan Thompson Society Newsletter

Summer 2008

Well, you get the picture!

I'm sure you expected a newsletter earlier ....but it takes much time and energy (and remember, we aren't kids anymore!) to do the groundwork, file the papers and find members willing to take on the job of commissioner, secretary, treasurer, board member, etc. We are still a very small organization as far as paid members, so we can't offer any "carrots" to people to get them to volunteer or to reward them. Speaking of which ---- are **YOUR DUES current? If not, see the form at the end of the newsletter!**

This entire experience has been to "boldly go where no one has gone before." None of us knew how to start a new clan society or how to approach Lyon Court to appeal our case for recognition as a clan in our own name (Lyon Court term). But, once we realized that Clan MacTavish was willingly embracing their history of theft by not one, but two chiefs, along with libel, character assassination, etc.,.....well, we had to lay out the facts to our DHA members and ask what they wished to do about the whole situation. What we are doing is the answer to that question.

So.....where are we? Well, as most of you are aware from the online forum and website, we have been corresponding with the new Lord Lyon, Mr. David Sellar, since March. The impetus of the correspondence being to re-establish Thom(p)sons as a clan in our own right. This is going to be a long, arduous process and we may never achieve fully what we want - Clan Thom(p)son on equal footing with other clans. However, if that is unattainable because of lack of proof that the Thomsons in Scotland were truly genetically linked (and not just patronymic ally linked by last name) then we will go the route that other similarly named clans have done.....we will apply for arms for Clan Thompson Society as the representative organization for ALL Scottish Thom(p)sons and variations throughout the world. Lyon has indicated this, at least, is attainable. Why hadn't we done this earlier? Because of the false information we had been given - that there had never been a Clan Thomson and that MacTavish and Thomson were synonymous and that the only avenue to celebrate our Scottish heritage was to do so as a member of Clan MacTavish. This was believable, because you never saw a Clan Thomson listed anywhere. But, with the obvious problems they were having with integrity and honesty in Clan MacTavish, we felt we could no longer be part of it. We could always join another clan and just continue to enjoy the highland games scene....or we could just go to the games independently....or we could do our own research and try to truly find out why the 6th largest name in Scotland had never been a clan. We chose the latter option - with surprising results!



## So far, our research has uncovered.....



1. There most definitely was a Clan Thomson with a chief, chieftain or commander in the Western Marches - most prevalently in Dumfriesshire/Ayresshire with another large group in the Lothian area around Edinburgh.

2. The Scottish Parliament recognized and addressed the existence of Clan Thomson in two separate acts in 1587 and 1594.

3. The Thomsons were (largely) part of the Riding Clans of the Scottish Marches.....or more commonly called Border Reivers.

4. What's a Border Reiver? Basically, a Scottish rendition of our the cattle rustlers of the American west. They existed in a "no man's land" between the ever-moving borders of England and Scotland. They preyed on both sides for their livelihood and were hired mercenaries when it suited their needs. Their loyalty was to kin and neighbor - not to either the Scottish or English crown.

5. Were there other Border Reivers? Yes! Many of which never lost their identity and are still clans today. Thomsons, however, were not so fortunate. After the unification in the early 1600s when the borders were 'pacified' by the sword and the noose, the Thomsons were dispersed and the chiefly line became lost to history. Some of the clans listed as Border Reivers include (not all of which are currently recognized clans): Ainslie, Archbold, Armstrong, Ballantine, Beattie(son), Bell, Bromfield, Bunyan, Burn, Carlisle, Carnaby, Carr, Carruthers, Cessford, Charlton, Chisholm, Collingwood, Coulter, Cranston, Craw, Cresswell, Crichton, Crozier, Curwen, Dacre, Davidson, Dixon, Dodds, Douglas, Dunne, Elliot, Fenwick, Forster, Gilchrist, Glendenning, Graham, Grey, Hall, Halliday, Harden, Hedley, Henderson, Heron, Hetherington, Hodgson, Hume, Irvine, Jamieson, Jardine, Johnstone, Kerr, Kilpatrick, Kinmont, Laidlaw, Little, Lowther, Maxwell, Milburn, Moffat, Murray, Musgrave, Nixon, Noble, Ogle, Oliver, Orde, Percy, Potts, Pringle, Reaveley, Redpath, Reed, Ridley, Robson, Routledge, Rutherford, Salkeld, Scott, Selby, Shaftoe, Sommerville, Stampfer, Stephenson, Storey, Tait, Taylor, Trotter, Turnbull, Tweedie, Veitch, Witherington, Waddington, Yarrow, and Young. Many other surnames dabbled in reiving to varying degrees and, when they weren't reiving, they were probably feuding.

6. There were arms registered for "Thomson of That Ilk" (or, "Thomson of Thomson" in the Workman's Manuscript (pre-cursor to Lyon's register) in the 1500s. These are the oldest arms for the name and may or may not have been those of a chief of a clan. There have been more than 60 Thom(p)son armigers (person granted personal arms).

7. While it may take years to get CLAN Thom(p)son itself recognized, we have every reason to believe that our society could be granted arms and be designated by Lord Lyon as the official organization for Thom(p)sons and it's variations throughout the world. We certainly wouldn't be the only society functioning that way. It may be the best choice while we do more research and eventually form the derbhfine to try to determine the chiefly line. We need to pursue the cost and timeliness of this option.

8. Once we apply for recognition based on the fact that we are an honorable community with a clan history we will be recognized by games committees as being sanctioned by Lyon Court, a problem we have now where some games committees won't recognize us because Lyon hasn't officially recognized us.



9. Our motto is the one most prevalent in our Thomson research: "Honesty is the best policy." Notice, it has nothing to do with Campbell, MacThomas, MacTavish, MacIntosh or any other clan. Based on the theme throughout almost all of the Thom(p)son armigers, our crest will include a red stag and gold stars. We have been using a logo for Clan Thompson Society incorporating these pieces:

10. We are registered in the state of Tennessee as a non-profit corporation

11. We held our first AGM (Annual General Meeting) at Glasgow, KY at the Glasgow Highland Games in June 2008. We had a great turnout, good meeting, and pot luck dinner. Thank you to all the ladies who donated food and their time - we couldn't do this without you! We had the 2nd largest group marching in the Parade of Tartans at the games - only the Kingdom of Ragnar had more than we did. We modified and passed new bylaws that will meet IRS requirements if we choose to apply for 501c3 rating. New kilts were annointed, a new Grand Poo-baa was selected and all the proper ceremonies were conducted :) See the minutes for info on the Grand Poo-baa ceremony!

12. We have made it plain to Lord Lyon that we do not consider ourselves in any way a part of Clan MacTavish or any other Scottish clan. While we concur with Thom(p)sons as septs for several clans, the bulk of the name were in the Lothian area around Edinburgh and in Dumfriesshire in the West Marche of Scotland. We have submitted proof that MacTavish has no claim on Thomsons from these areas and that we were recognized as a clan long before Clan MacTavish - so if anything, they would have to be part of Clan Thomson rather than vice versa! Dugald MacTavish spread his version of clan "history" wide and far and it was accepted without investigation. It was, after all, given by a chief. Well, most of it was wishful thinking and not facts and it has taken 6 months of proof from us to Lyon to get him to see the truth. We continue in this effort and believe we are winning our case.

Note: The use of the variation Thomson vs Thompson is based on context and location

#### .....and in other news.....

We have several members attending the **Estes Park, Colorado** Highland Games the first weekend of September. Thanks to Dan "Booner" Thompson for taking on transportation, lodging and tent organizing! Tom Thompson and Barbara Marion from Indiana, Harold and Patsy Bennett from Kentucky, and Tom Thompson from Tennessee will all be joining Booner and his son for the games. And who knows who else might show up??? I think we have some 'extras' arriving for the Parade of Tartans if all goes well.....Oh yeah! And Booner will be wearing his brand, spanking new kilt! PICTURES PLEASE!!!

Stu and Dorothy Thompson went to the **Maine Highland Games** (just as tourists!) and sent in the following story: *Well I'm back! We had a great time at the 30th Annual Maine Highland Games held at Thomas Point Beach in Brunswick, ME on Saturday. Dottie and I took our oldest grandson and one of his friends along it was their first games and they had a wonderful time watching the athletics and listening to Prydein playing cuts from their latest CD "Loud Pipes Save Lives!". The featured entertainers were the Tannahill Weavers direct from Scotland and one of the finest traditional bands in the world. In addition to the athletics there was dance and band competitions, sheep dog demonstrations, historic Scots reenactors, loads of vendors and of course the Clan Tents. Clan Murray was the Honored Clan for this years festivities but there were many others to keep them company. Dottie and I had gone to the NH games last year which is the largest in New England and took place over three days but even though this was a one day affair we both liked the Maine games better. The weather was beautiful and the way everything was laid out didn't leave you exhausted trying to get from one event/display to another. Looking forward to next year already. Meanwhile there are more games coming up this year but don't know how many I'll be able to get to since it gets expensive with the traveling. This weekend there are games in Quechee, VT and next month is the NH games at Loon*

*the 12th in Scotland. I'm going to try to go to the Scotland games since that's only about an hour away. Someday maybe I can get a tent and represent the Clan Thompson Society at some of these New England games and give some competition to those other guys who are well represented up this way. In fact I've heard they are to be the Honored Clan at the New Hampshire games this year so I think I'll skip that one.*  
- Stirling Thompson

Also upcoming in September is the **Columbus Scottish Festival and Highland Games** in Columbus, Ohio on 13-14 September. We have a nice contingent going to the games to represent Clan Thompson.... Fred and Babs Cash, Tom Thompson and Barbara Marion, Fred, Heidi, Nathan and Hannah Thompson (Nathan will be competing in the caber toss for his age group - cheer him on!), and Ted and Pam Herring.

### **And.... From Down Under or, if the world was upside down..... from the Top!**

*Since the last newsletter things have progressed slowly here down under.*

*Prior to the revelations regarding Steven MacTavish, I had joined an organization here in the local Scottish community named the SCOTTISH CLANS CONGRESS of QUEENSLAND.*

*This is an organization established to enable all the Clans to have a voice in a community dominated by The St. Andrew's Society and other restrictive organizations.*

*Due to the fact that I was originally appointed by Dugald MacTavish as his Commissioner to Australia & New Zealand, I was accepted into the Congress (with a letter of introduction from Chief Dugald) with the title of High Commissioner Clan MacTavish. Since that time, I have served the Congress as Assistant President and, earlier this year, was elected to the position of President.*

*During this period as you all know, many things have happened including theft, skullduggery and conspiracy, just to mention a few. In addition, the new Chief of the MacTavish chose to completely ignore Clan members outside of North America -I guess there wasn't enough money to be had outside of the US and Canada, but here I was a duly elected official in a position of trust and high esteem which I couldn't, in all good conscience, retain as a MacTavish. I had not been asked to resign from the Clan MacTavish, I can only presume from his actions (or lack thereof) that he wanted the publicity attached to my position without it costing him anything.*

*This left me with no alternative but to announce at a Congress Quarterly Meeting that I was resigning my position as High Commissioner Clan MacTavish and denounced Clan MacTavish for all that they stand for under the current Chief. A full explanation was made to the Congress as to the behaviour and actions of Clan MacTavish and their Chiefs. The response was total silence, and so I proceeded to announce that I was now the Australian representative to Clan Thom(p)son Association and we were currently working with Lord Lyon toward the reinstatement of the ancient Clan Thomson. This was met with much applause and duly noted in the minutes that Clan MacTavish be removed and Clan Thomson be noted.*

*Since that time, I have attended several functions in an official capacity, e.g. Bannockburn Dinner, Tartan Day, Kirk'n o' the Tartan and Burns Night celebrations and have met with favourable response from all Clans to Clan Thomson. For our Association I feel there is only one way and that is **UP**.*

*If I don't see y'all at The Gathering, I hope to catch up on our return journey through the States to Oz in Aug next year.*

*Mar sin leibh an dràsda,*

*Ern*

