



The Tartan

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Black Grouse
- Christmas Greetings
- Search for the Kyle Family

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Gurgle, Burgle,
Hiss-Hiss
My Bonnie Hen
give us a KISS!

**THEY SING, THEY
DANCE &...
THEIR LIVES ARE
SPECIAL TO
SCOTS AND
SCOTLAND**

Tartan Editor, Scott MacDougald, gave me a Christmas present! It was not the traditional Harry and David fruit basket, nor a set of Clan MacDowall whiskey glasses in honor of my lineage, but a bird, one that could sing, dance and "like a man in a kilt," make the female birds swoon.

The gift came by way of an assignment to write about the Black Grouse for the December 2023 Tartan - an honor for a very new member of



They Sing, They Dance (cont)

CMSNA. What I was about to learn would be a forceful catalyst for change in my own life. Let me explain: I turned to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in the UK for help. They are not only the preeminent source of information on the Black Grouse... but have long been a powerhouse of support for the bird's preservation and regeneration. Let me introduce you to my new RSPB colleagues, for that is what Black Grouse Officers Chris Bailey and Julia Gallagher have become.



Gayle: “Chris and Julia, I must confess I know very little about the Black Grouse and why this particular bird is important to our CMSNA Clan and Scotland?”

Julia: “Well, Gayle, I think our colleague from Dumfries & Galloway Council. Nick Chisholm said it best, so I’ll quote him; ‘Black Grouse were once an abundant upland bird in southern Scotland, their calls common in our soundscape - a gurgling burbling and hissing voice that could be heard up to 2 miles away. Strutting males gathered on moss at traditional lek sites to display and occasionally fight, competing to catch the eye of the picky grey hens.’

Gayle: “LOL! I was just at the Seaside Highland Games in Ventura California, USA where the display of manly fighting, marching and bagpiping Scotsmen drew the fond attention of many women, including me! Stately, fearsome, and proud is how I would describe them. Does that fit with the male Black Grouse as well?”



They Sing, They Dance (cont)

Julia: *"That's a great comparison Gayle. Black Grouse is a totemic species that reflects the health and robustness of the upland habitat. When their numbers are strong, they bring a rich biodiversity to the region. They thrive where there are natural pockets of wet and rushy ground that attract hens to nest and later provide a protective place for their chicks to hide and grow by feeding on insects that live there. These are secret places often, hidden from view."*

Gayle: *"I love the idea that Mother Nature nurtures and protects Her creatures in so many visible and invisible ways. Chris, what does it take to keep the grouse healthy?"*

Chris: *"A healthy habitat for grouse would include...and this will make you laugh Gayle, a 'dancing ring'!"*

Gayle: *"No! Really?"*

Chris: *"Yes! You can think of it as short-swarded grassy hill top and valley floor arenas where the males like to show off their prowess to attract a mate through an enactment of its own Highland or Lowland fling. They also require flanks of heather clad hill sides, where berries and seeds can be richly foraged."*



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MacDowall

They Sing, They Dance (cont)

Gayle: What about winter? How do they survive?

Julia: *"I'll read you something I recently wrote...I'm waxing a bit poetic here but I believe it offers a well and true answer to your question. 'When autumn and winter draws in, berry-clad trees of rowan and hawthorn provide rich pickings to off-set the cold until the catkins of the birch arrive in spring and blankets of cotton grass clad the moors and provides the energy to move towards the cycle of breeding and productivity required to sustain the population.'"*

Gayle: "That's so beautiful Julia!"

Julia: *"The sad thing Gayle, is that the Black Grouse are diminishing especially in Southern Scotland and at a rapid rate."*

Gayle: That's terrible Julia and Chris! Why?

Chris: *"This decline is emblematic of the wider biodiversity loss suffered by other species that share this landscape. RSPB considers the conservation of the Black Grouse a priority. We provide expertise and advice to landowners and farmers to support their sympathetic management of the land so that future generations who will be the custodians of this habitat can enjoy the very special experience of lekking Black Grouse as part of a living upland landscape."*

Julia: *"Let me add that shaping and safeguarding the habitats and species across the uplands is essential. The sound of a healthy upland moorland can be orchestrally deafening. Its demise is silence."*

Gayle: That's a stark reality, one I certainly don't want to happen! As it turns out I'll be attending our CMSNA Clan Gathering in Oban Scotland, July 2024. Perhaps we can meet, talk, visit a Black Grouse Reserve and you can tell me what I can do personally, what our MacDougall Society can do as a group and even, if the desire is there, how the Scottish Clans internationally can help RSPB. Many supportive hands are sure to make our workload lighter. I believe it is our honor, joy and responsibility to continue the Scottish legacy as together we care for our people, nature and the land.



Gayle Crosby MacDowell

NOTE FROM GAYLE TO OUR TARTAN READERS:

If this article inspires you to help RSPB and the Black Grouse in some way in the future, please send an **"I'm interested in learning how to help RSPB conserve the Black Grouse"** reply to my email:

gaylecrosby@kw.com In return, I'll send you a signed PDF of my Black Grouse cartoon as a thank you!

If you want to be kept-in-the loop as regenerative ideas are considered and opportunities for action created in order to increase the 'gurgling, burgling and hissing' sounds, just add to your response: **"Please keep me in the loop!"**

Festive Greetings from Dunollie, Oban!



As Scotland settles into the winter spirit, we can't help but think of the summer ahead, partly because we miss the longer days and sunshine but more importantly because the next International Clan Macdougall Gathering is coming up!

We are delighted to have exchanged with some of you and to hear that for many, this will be a first trip to Scotland and to the clan's ancestral home. This will also be the first Gathering for many in our team, with the exception of Ann and Kylie – needless to say, we can't wait to finally meet more of you in person! Our 2024 Clan Gathering Merchandise is currently available for pre-orders on the Draper's Shop's website, which coincidentally, is also busy custom making kilts and kilted skirts with the Heritage MacDougall Tartan for a few of you. These can take up to 8 weeks to be ready, so please remember to let us know well in advance if you need a new one for the summer. The Drapers Shop | The Draper's Shop at Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds

We are slowly edging closer to our target of 200 registered attendees, but for those of you still missing from our list, registration tickets can be purchased on our website: Dunollie Museum, Castle and Grounds - Oban. If you intend to come, please make sure you have booked a registration ticket before January. Once the new year starts, it might seem like everything is happening very fast. We will be releasing tickets to most Gathering events and activities around the 15th January, although it may also happen in the week leading up to it. Having already booked a registration ticket and therefore being a Registered Clan Gathering Attendee, will give you priority booking onto all events including talks, walks, visits and more. Activities that don't sell out in January / February might be opened to the public (i.e. to people who haven't registered) in the summer but we can't guarantee there will be any spaces left by then. As always, if you have any questions, we are here to help – just email us on info@dunollie.org.

Alongside Gathering preparations, we are also about to begin one of our largest ever funded projects: 'Sophy & White: The Dunollie collections Unboxed'. Starting in January 2024 and for 30-months after that, thanks to this project we will audit, review, record, contextualise and maximise the impact of two discrete collections housed in our museum's temporary storerooms 'Sophy' and 'White'. 'Sophy' is home to 3,000 items of MacDougall clan and family dress and textiles dating from 1620 to early 20th century. These objects have been largely locked down since their discovery in 2002 for their



MacDougall

Festive Greetings from Dunollie, Oban! (cont)

safety. 'White' houses the Hope MacDougall Collection gathered in the latter half of the 20th century to record the working and domestic life in Argyll and across the Highlands and Islands. It includes over 5,000 objects supported by substantial archive and background material. We have been patiently waiting for over a decade to develop these collections so that they can play their part in shaping a sustainable future by assisting education, health and well-being. We are finally able to do so thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Scotland.



As you might have guessed, we are also getting ready to reopen for the 2024 season. This year, we are putting together a brand-new exhibition about Dunollie, the Clan MacDougall, and Medicine through History. There is such an incredible mix of stories from completely different time periods related to this topic, we don't know how to make it all fit in one room! Luckily, we still have a few months to figure that out before we open on the 15th of March 2024. We are planning to keep careful records of all aspects of our historical research which doesn't make it into the exhibition, with hope of digitalising some of the more interesting findings and likely adding those to our website. We hope that many of you will be able to make the trip over to Scotland and see it, whether during the Gathering Week or at any other point during our open season (15th March – 30th October).

Merry Christmas and Happy Hogmanay!

Best wishes,

Florence and the Dunollie Team



Christmas Greetings

Greetings to all North American Clansfolk. This comes to wish you a very HAPPY CHRISTMAS and fulfilling NEW YEAR in 2024.

We hope to see as many of you from across the ocean both throughout the year and especially for the Clan Gathering in Oban at Dunollie from July 30th to August 4th and hope you will be able to book accommodation early, as it is a busy time of year for Oban.

Dunollie has had a busy summer with visitors enjoying some new additions to the grounds – this includes the long awaited Castle handrail, donated kindly by yourselves.

We also have new paths and trails throughout the grounds funded by grants. This coming winter we shall be working on preserving and sharing our collections of Textiles and Historic objects in addition to work on the Castle and its Cliff face below. Those of you who have visited before, may see some other changes when you visit later next year

I look forward to meeting old friends and newcomers who can make it to our summer Clan Gathering or earlier in the year. You will be most welcome, both by myself, my family and the Dunollie Team.

We thank all of you who at home, both young and old who belong to our Clan, may you have a very blessed Christmas.

Morag MacDougall of MacDougall



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Christmas Greetings from Clan MacDowall

Merry Christmas and a happy new year to all the MacDowall and MacDougall clansfolk around the world!

Season's Greetings and a Merry Christmas to all.

J.A. Dougal Macdowall

Grandson of Clan Chief Professor Fergus D.H. Macdowall



MacDowall

President's Report



Our favorite time of year as a whole family, is decorating for the festivities. Most of the ornaments that decorate our tree are homemade or photograph-styled. Each one has a memory attached to it such as "First Christmas" or a school project made for Mom/Dad, or even one we made at our family Christmas gathering with friends. The holidays are a personal time of year for my personal family. It begins at Thanksgiving when we count our blessings and get ready to celebrate those in our lives we are thankful for. It runs through Christmas when we hope for snow and wonder what gift would celebrate each member best, and comes to a close with the New Year

Celebration when we look back on the year past and look forward to all the possibilities of the year to come.

The year 2023 is coming to a beautiful close.... And looking forward to 2024 when we get to celebrate our family heritage and history with a Clan MacDougall gathering in Oban. It will be my first trip across the ocean to any destination. I can't help but look forward to making Scotland and Dunollie Castle and grounds my first adventure off the continent of North America. For those reading this, I wish you many blessings to count this Thanksgiving. I wish you all the happiness, joy, peace, and blessings through the Christmas holidays and all it represents to you and yours. I wish you a happy New Year to come in 2024 and I hope to meet many of you in Oban at the International Gathering from July 30th, through August 4th.

Thank you Madame Morag MacDougall of MacDougall and all of Dunollie Trustees for putting on such an occasion so we may see and learn more about our heritage in Scotland.

Yours Sincerely,
Misha Lowther
President, CMSNA



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Search for the Kyle Family

A Walk to Remember in a Forgotten Place

By: Jacci DiCarlo

Almost all Americans can say with certainty, that they are a composite of ancestors who came from a variety of other places. I am no exception. My DNA reveals an ancestral collage of 34% German, 29% English, 19% Irish, 14% Scottish, 3% Norwegian, and 1% Indigenous American. I am a typical American “mutt”. My name at birth, Kyle, comes from my Scottish ancestors. I have spent years researching the Kyle name and its history as it pertains to my direct ancestors. After combing meticulously through DNA results for my father and myself, printed material, and online data, I was finally able to declare with some certainty that the last place my Kyle ancestors lived before crossing the Atlantic and making a home in America, was not actually Scotland. It was County Tyrone, in Northern Ireland. The Ulster-Scot Kyle family had buried only one generation in Irish soil before some of them sailed away to America in the very early 18th century. Today, the Kyles are numerous in County Tyrone, and the evidence of their long local history is scattered across Northern Ireland and even quite far south into Ireland. In October of 2021, my husband David and I had the privilege of visiting this beautiful emerald island with my cousin Randy and his wife Aimee and we saw some of the history of the Kyle family name. Our time there resulted in a warmth in my soul that I know will stay with me forever.



Not far from our hotel in Dublin, Trinity College was on my list of places to see, not for any Kyle memorabilia, but for other historical treasures. We strolled through the Long Room in the library and admired the 40 busts of important historical men that lined the hall. The beginning of the room was adorned with busts of ancient Greek philosophers and as we walked through the room, the figures progressed through history until we reached the end of the room where we encountered the bust of Samuel Kyle. What a surprise! This man was a bishop in the Church of Ireland in the early 19th century, just before the famine, and was noted as being opposed to any notions of Irish independence. He was born near Londonderry, not far from the home of my Kyle ancestors. He likely would have been related to the Kyles of County Tyrone. My Catholic Regan and Sullivan ancestors would have hated this man who personified Irish oppression. Samuel Kyle instantly became a person of interest to me. His name is one I would look for in the coming days in Northern Ireland.

The original Ulster-Scot Kyle, Patrick Kyll lived at Bracky, near Omagh. We didn't find his land, but we found the Ulster American Folk Park, a living museum that told the stories of three families (not the Kyles) and their journeys from Northern Ireland to America. After visiting the park, we stopped at the library next door. Although we walked through the door just 30 minutes before closing time, the librarian seemed genuinely excited to help us find the documents that pertained to the Kyle family. Some of them were handwritten



MacDougall

Search for the Kyle Family (cont)

family trees for various branches that all stemmed from 17th-century Patrick Kyle. The librarian allowed us to photograph each document.

Samuel Kyle, whose bust we saw at Trinity College, was in the “Kyles of Dungiven” family tree. That document told the story of a branch of Kyles that came from “Ayrshire in Scotland at the time of the murder of Archbishop Sharpe”, an event that took place May 3, 1679. Bishop Samuel Kyle also appeared in a marginal note in the “Kyles of Tyrone” tree. Since Patrick Kyll appears in the hearth tax of 1666, I suspect that the estimated 1679 date of arrival of the Kyles in Ulster (Northern Ireland) may have been based more on conjecture than on records. The overall impression I derived from my previous research and these historical library treasures was that Patrick Kyle (Kyll) came to Ireland sometime before 1666, possibly with his brothers, who settled within 50 kilometers of Patrick. But, just as the 1679 estimate was probably a guess, so too was my estimate. I also found mentions of the Bracky deed (Patrick’s land that was sold by his grandson and great-grandson in 1737) and the Mournebeg lease of 1683. I was already familiar with both documents to the extent that I knew the exact location of the Mournebeg farm and mill. My previous research had pointed to Mournebeg as the last place my Kyle ancestors lived before sailing to America. The 30-kilometer drive to Mournebeg was quick. The land that was once the Kyle flax mill and farm seemed to have been sold off in parts and was now divided by Magheranageeragh Road. West of the road and north of River Mournebeg several structures stood in ruin. Historically, the last use of this part of the property was a rectory for the Church of Ireland, which made sense to me since one of the Kyles of the 18th century, “Tory” Will Kyle, became a Church of Ireland Priest. We knew that this was part of the original Kyle flax mill because we found the (longitude/latitude coordinates) on a website that identified historic mills of County Tyrone. The property was overgrown with grass and weeds and none of the buildings remained fully intact. The oldest buildings, probably built in the late 17th or early 18th century were small and roofless with crumbling walls that stood at most 5 feet. The newer buildings, built maybe at different times in the 19th century stood two stories. The larger one had completely collapsed inside, and we could see that there was once a tile-faced fireplace on each floor, one directly above the other. This must have been the rectory. A mostly collapsed stone fence surrounded the property. We imagined that the smallest, most decayed building was the original home of the Kyles in 1683.



Search for the Kyle Family (cont)

Through the trees and across the street stood a more modern but also abandoned home that was probably built sometime in the late 18th or early 19th century. This was clearly part of the Kyle property because a Kyle coat of arms was impressed on the front of the house. Because of the overgrowth of weeds, we could not get close enough to peer in the windows of the structure. The house was not a surprise for me. I had accidentally stumbled across an image of it online in the months before our trip. A little research had revealed that there were residential records showing a Kyle living in the home as recently as the early 20th century. But the white lace curtains behind the broken windows looked as if they may have been no older than 40 or 50 years.

The nearest town, Castlederg was about 5 kilometers north of the Mournebeg property. My final and most profound Kyle encounter took place in this town when we tried to visit WJ Kyle hardware and drapery store on The Diamond (street name). We were disappointed when we arrived shortly after the store closed for the day. Randy and David had wandered down the street to explore before a woman approached Aimee and I outside the store and asked if she could help us. We told her that we were distant relatives of the Kyles and were just hoping to see the store. Instead of letting us in the store, she did something even better. She took us down a narrow hallway that led to a modest doorway next to the store, and she knocked to summon a frail elderly woman who seemed to be aged about 90 years. The woman's name was Margaret. Margaret, the current owner of the store had lived above it her entire life. Because of her concerns about the pandemic, she didn't invite us in. But she was pleased to stand in her doorway and tell us of some of her memories. The memory that she told most vividly was of Christmas day, 1937, the day her mother saw flames and smoke rising to the bathroom window as she took a bath. The original store burned to the ground that day and her family lost everything, store and home. But they rebuilt it all in 1938, which explained the number 1938 prominently displayed on the front of the current building. Our encounter with Margaret was at most 15 minutes long. It was one of the most profound few minutes of my life.

In 2023, I was sad to learn that WJ Kyle permanently closed its doors. I don't know what became of Margaret. Maybe she passed away or was just too tired to continue to run the business that had accompanied her through life. I wish her and all the Kyles of the Emerald Isle well. I am truly thankful that my years of ancestral research culminated in this handful of identity-defining moments. It is a fine thread that connects each of us to others who share our ancestors from hundreds of years ago. I followed that fine thread and for a moment my soul connected with one of those people. In the journey, I came to understand in a new way who I am.

Editor's Note: On behalf of our readers I would like to show my appreciation to Jacci DiCarlo for writing such an intriguing story of the Kyle family for us. In her April, September and December articles she has brought genealogy to life for us this year. Her story has shown us that it is much more than just dates and names on a page. It is the story of the family that made you and it is the story of your connections to other times in other lands. Thank you for sharing it with us.



MacDougall

Clan MacDougall Society of North America



MacDowall

Reference information for Society members

Get the most out of your membership!

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As a registered 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit, CMSNA depends on the financial contributions of our members to fulfill our “literary, historical, and educational” purposes. The Society connects 750 clanfolk like you who want to celebrate, share and preserve our proud legacy. We rely on volunteers and no one receives compensation for their efforts.

The Value of Membership

Membership is rewarding and loyalty is widespread. More than 40-percent are 25-year contributors and nearly 300 have become Life Members. Your contributions are tax deductible in the U.S. Membership is on a calendar year basis and members must make a minimum yearly contribution of \$25 by December 31st to remain active. Life Memberships are also available. The minimum contribution only covers our basic operating expenses and allows you to enjoy our popular newsletters and special Society events that help build lasting relationships. Contributions in excess of the \$25 minimum make a significant difference in our funding for scholarships, historic site preservation and new programs. Please consider contributing above the minimum, because there's so much more we can accomplish.

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