



The Raven

Monthly Newsletter of the
Clan MacDougall Society of North America



This Month In History... Lubeck Letter

On 11 October 1297, William Wallace and Andrew Murray wrote directly to German traders to invite them to deal with Scottish merchants. William Wallace, leader of the Scottish independence movement, was fresh off of a victory at the Battle of Stirling Bridge. This victory allowed Scotland to regain control of its shipping ports from England, thereby opening up trade with various areas such as Lubeck, Germany. The Lubeck Letter is the only known historical writing to exist directly from William Wallace. The seal has led historians to doubt the story of William Wallace's parentage, as the translation reads, "William, son of Alan Wallace." Previously, his father was thought to be Malcolm Wallace. Ultimately, this would shift the location of William's origin, of which very little is known for certain.



The Lubeck Letter has not only historical significance, but an interesting journey through history. Containing the only known impression of William Wallace's seal (drawing pictured right), this artifact was lost to history until it was discovered in the Lubeck archives in the 1820s. In 1942, Lubeck saw attack from Allied aircraft as World War II raged on. The document, as well as other

artifacts, were placed into a saltmine for safekeeping as was common practice during the war. However, Lubeck was in a part of Germany that came under Soviet control as the war ended, and the Soviets confiscated all historical artifacts. Poor record keeping on the part of the Soviets led historians to believe that the Lubeck letter was lost entirely. In the 1970s, the Soviets found the letter in their archives. While it took much negotiation, the Soviets returned the Lubeck Letter to the town in 1990.



Sources

HistoryScotland

Scottish Archives for Schools

Games Update: Maine Highland Games

By Anne Carine

A friend and I travelled to Brunswick, Maine for the Maine Highland Games at Thomas Point! We arrived Friday for our first Ceilidh experience! We enjoyed camp stew and homemade bread made by our own Don and Ann MacDougal! Even tried some haggis!! Wonderful music filled the air. Country dancing was enjoyed by all who wanted to join and the burning of the castle was enjoyed and highlighted by Charlie Zahm's singing and the full moon rising behind!

Saturday started with a glorious sunrise over a Maine farm as we drove to Thomas Point! We were delighted to be visited by a life clan member from California! His wife was competing in athletics! We were overjoyed to have the company of Ed and Sheila McDowell at our tent. They joined us in conversations with folks that stopped with questions. Ed was honored to receive a Gaelic blessing and toast, with a dram of Scotch, by drum major Jimmy Rodden, of the Dunlop Highland Band. The day was filled with children popping in and out for their stamps too. Overall, an enjoyable day.



Games Update: VA State Scottish Games - Plains, Virginia

By John Dowdle



Cynthia and John Dowdle attended the Saturday day festivities at VA State Scottish games in The Plains, VA over Labor Day weekend. It was a 2-day festival. The weather was about perfect for early September, sunny, in the low 80s. A huge crowd turned out this year after last year's cancellation of the Games due to Covid. There were some restrictions and a reduced number of events in light of the Delta variant still being prevalent. The majority of visitors respected everyone's distance and the requests for masking in certain areas. Most visitors to the tent who wanted more information used their cellphone cameras to copy the website, facebook page or QR codes we provided, and quite a few took a membership brochures. In addition, we had 5 adult nieces and a nephew from the Dowdle-Bell clans come up from NC and SC for the weekend. They enjoyed their first Scottish games, and marching with us in the review parade mid-day.



Amanda & Lauren Dowdle, Ashton Bell, John, Tay & Taylor Bell

We were fortunate to have a great tent location this time. Being on the end we were one of the first clan tents everyone came to as they entered the clan area. Along with my highland weapons display, I also displayed the Viking game of Hnetafl, and a large version of the Isle of Lewis chess set. These displays easily drew between 200-300 people to the tent throughout the day. (We were very busy from start to finish!). I was frankly stunned at the level of interest and curiosity tent visitors had for these board games. I think they provided a great source to engage in conversation. We had several people come up to the tent, and using the instructions provided, played a game or two of Hnetafl. And several folks engaged in brief chess matches as well.



Several members (and potential members) of Clans MacDougall and MacDowall visited the tent, and if not Society members, they did take information. Early in the morning, our webmaster John McDowall came by to say hello, but he could not stay as he was participating in the band competition all day.

The Highland/Celtic sword/knife display was again very popular with the adults; both male and female. That, along with the board games, was a big draw throughout the day. Several ladies commented favorably on our new banner as it represents both a male and female warrior.

Newly appointed Mid-Atlantic Commissioner Jon MacLucas came by to drop off a beautiful Scottish made targe with the MacDougall crest on it. We plan to share the targe with the hosts of future games events.

It was nice to see such a big crowd, and hopefully by next year the games can return to full activity levels. In spite of restrictions and adjustments made due to Covid, people were definitely enjoying themselves and seemed very happy to again have the opportunity to share their joint culture.



Witches of North Berwick

In the United States, the story of the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 has become common Halloween lore. Arguably, it is the best known story of witch trials, immortalized in everything from Arthur Miller's classic play *The Crucible* (1953), to the cult classic motion picture *Hocus Pocus* (1993), to television's *Salem* (2014). However, witch trials weren't limited to the Puritans of the United States. One hundred years prior, Scotland experienced its own savage witch hunt, led by King James VI himself.



Image is from *Newes from Scotland*, witches meet with the devil in the kirkyard.

Shortly before King James VI took the throne, the Scottish Witchcraft Act was passed outlawing the practice of witchcraft and consulting with witches. Passed during the turmoil of the religion debate that marred the end of Queen Mary's reign, the Witchcraft Act has been considered one of the most deadly pieces of legislation to come from Scotland. One of its more notorious wieldings resulted in the North Berwick Witch Trials that began in 1590.

In 1590 (or 1589, depending on the source) King James VI went to Denmark to escort his bride to be Queen Anne to Scotland. James had to turn back during his initial trip due to

storms, and experienced additional storms on the way back to Scotland with Anne. James blamed this misfortune on witchcraft, and sought to punish those responsible. North Berwick, a small village on the coast, took the brunt of James's wrath thanks to a rumor that a witch had rode into the sea to cast a spell to summon the storms.

While it's hard to know exactly how many people were ultimately accused, tried, and executed during the North Berwick Witch Trials (estimates are 70-200), there are two cases that stand out in history. Anges Simpson, a midwife, and Geillie Duncan (also seen as Geillis Duncan), a healer, were both accused of witchcraft. (Note: If the name Geillis Duncan seems familiar, you might be a fan of *Outlander*. A character of the same named is accused of witchcraft in the series.) They were taken to Holyrood and interrogated by James himself. Both women underwent significant torture until they confessed, though it is likely they confessed to stop the torture. A pamphlet, *Newes from Scotland*, was commissioned and printed by James in 1591 that outlined the torture Duncan underwent during questioning. Ultimately, Geillie was burned at the stake.

St. Andrew's Kirk, where the witches supposedly gathered, no longer stands in North Berwick. The foundation and porch are all that remain. However, what remains features a Memento Mori to the women who were tortured and murdered during the North Berwick Witch Trials.



Sources

[ScotlandMag](#)

[Historic UK](#)

New Members

Joseph McDowell
Furling, PA

Mikko Salomaa
Helsinki, Finland

Evan McDowell
Elkhart, IN

Richard Trammell
South Mills, NC

Suzanne Kennedy
Gainsborough, Lincolnshire

Elizabeth McDougall
Cary, NC

Amanda Pitt-Reed
Ashland City, TN

Karen Balthrop
Austin, TX

Kimberly Durden
Athens, GA

Guy McDowell
Ewing, IL

Vincent Martinez
Aberdeen, WA

Jake Cole
West Des Moines, IA

Flowers of the Forest



Nellie Macdougall Parks
Bingham, ME

Hugh C. MacDougall
Cooperstown, NY

Jennifer Kenway
Mauldin, SC

Janet L. McDougall
New York, NY

Clayton MacDougall
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Upcoming Events

Alexandria Christmas Walk
December 4, 2021
Alexandria, VA

From the **Dunollie Draper's Shop**



"Earlier this year, we launched the arrival of our beautiful Lorn Tweed Fabric online. After the remarkable success we are excited to welcome The Lorn Tweed Brushed Wool Scarf to the Collection!"

Newsletter Submissions

Persons wishing to submit articles, photos, or items of interest may contact:
Lindsay Davis, Editor
newseditor@macdougall.org

Scholarship Updates

Thank you notes are rolling in from our scholars. Your generous donations allow these students to preserve their Scottish culture, and we are happy to pass their notes on to you!

From Beret Dernbach:

Dear Clara MacDougall,

Thank you for awarding me one of your scholarships this year. I am incredibly thankful for your continued support of my dancing career. Your very generous scholarship gift will help offset the cost of my dancing lessons to help me prepare for my upcoming competitions.

I have just returned from my first competition back, which was in Jacksonville, FL. I won all four days of competition, which was the best result I could have asked for. All of my hard work over the past 14 months has paid off. I have 3 more competitions planned in the coming months.

Thanks again, Clara MacDougall. I will be sure to keep you updated on my results now that I'm back to competing.

All the best, Beret Dernbach

From the Kraus Family:

Weston, Eilidh, and Colten Kraus

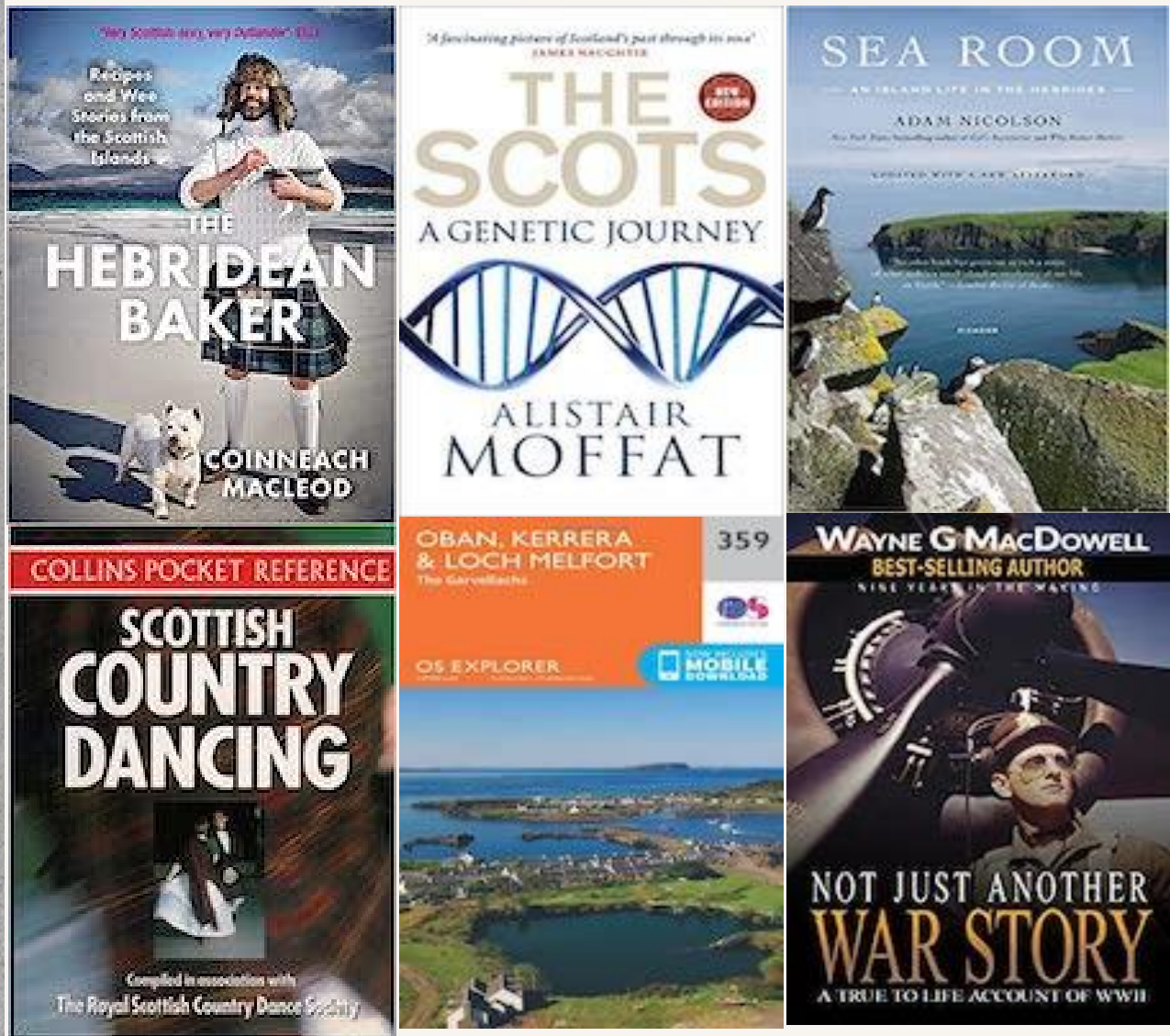


Weston, Colten & Eilidh have been working hard all this past year while we have been quarantined. In June, competitions finally started back up with new covid guidelines. We attended a competition in Gilbert, AZ & another in Sacramento, CA within the first few weeks of getting to dance again wearing their kilts. They all danced wonderfully & came home with 4-1sts, 4-2nds, 2-3rds, 2-4th and a trophy!

In July we travelled to Ponte Vedra, FL for 3 days of competitions with Highland Dancers from all over the United States. It was a wonderful experience & many new friendships were made. Weston was in the 13 & under premier class and placed in 5 of his dances. Colten and Eilidh danced against each other in the Premier 11 and under class. Colten placed in 4 dances and Eilidh (the youngest in her class) placed in 3 dances & placed 6th overall in her jig & hornpipe. They have three more competitions for 2021 and have already begun working on steps for 2022 and looking forward to Nationals in Madison, WI.

We are all so thankful for your support with their Highland Dancing. It has definitely helped them be able to continue pursuing the sport they love so much and growing in their Scottish Heritage & Knowledge.
Love, The Kraus Family

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We are informed that doing so places our Society at risk of violating current internet privacy laws.

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