



CLAN DONNACHAIDH SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

2009 – No 1a

NEWS FROM THE CLAN CENTRE

The Museum at the Clan Centre

The Museum recently acquired a page's livery worn by Sir Edward Reid, Honorary President of the Clan Donnachaidh Society from 1964 to 1972, at the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary in 1911. Sir Edward was 10 at the time and had been appointed as page to Queen Mary. He was in attendance on many other royal occasions. The livery has been lent by Sir Alexander Reid.



Left: The Clan Centre and shop at Bruar, with a hazy view of Ben Vrackie (which overlooks Pitlochry) in the distance (centre). Right: The livery worn by Sir Edward Reid when he served as page to Queen Mary at the coronation in 1911.

If you are not sure of the location of the centre, see this Google map link:

http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=clan+donnachaidh+centre+scotland&ll=56.774927,-3.928299&spn=0.370589,0.439453&ie=UTF8&ll=56.774927,-3.933792&spn=0.370589,0.439453&z=11



Inside the clan museum. In the background is the portrait of the Poet Chief (Alexander Robertson, 13th of Struan, d. 1749). The glass case below contains a mace of the Perthshire Highland Fencibles belonging to Colonel William Robertson of Lude.

The case in the foreground, marked with the number 4, contains the Clach-na-Bratach (the stone of the standard). It is said to have been found on lifting the chief's standard from the ground, either before the Battle of Bannockburn or on a campaign against MacDougall of Lorn. The stone was one of several charm crystals found in the Highlands and in Ireland. It was reputed to cure diseases in cattle and horses who drank the water in which the stone had been dipped three times by the hand of Struan Robertson. The last chief reported to have performed this ritual was Alexander Robertson, 16th of Struan (1745-1830). He dipped the stone in a large china bowl filled with spring water, which was distributed to a number of people who had travelled a long way to obtain it for medicinal purposes.

A television programme about Clan Donnachaidh

Paul Murton has made a series of television programmes about certain Highland clans for BBC Television. He began with an investigation into his own MacGregor ancestry and then went on to explore the defining moments in the histories of Clans MacDonald, MacLeod, Campbell, Fraser and MacKenzie.

He is doing a programme on Clan Donnachaidh, but has not been to Bruar to see any of the artefacts yet. He was going to come but it snowed on that day. It has not been announced when it will be broadcast.

See

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/tv/home/documentary/feature/index.shtml>

for details of the earlier programmes. It seems you may still be able to watch them online via this site. However, the watch-again facility may not be available outside the UK.

The commemoration of the Battle of Culloden

For over 100 years, a commemoration of the Battle of Culloden has been organized by the Gaelic Society of Inverness. In the past it was always a relatively low-key event but, a few years ago, during a significant anniversary year, the National Trust for Scotland put on a special exhibition. The opening of the exhibition was timed to coincide with the commemoration. This brought in a lot more people, resulting in a higher attendance at the commemoration since then. It is held on the nearest Saturday to the date of the battle (16 April); consequently this year it was held on 18 April. Sylvia and Duncan Robertson represented the Clan Donnachaidh Society.

(These photos were taken at the commemoration in 2008)



Flowers laid at the memorial cairn at the end of the ceremony.

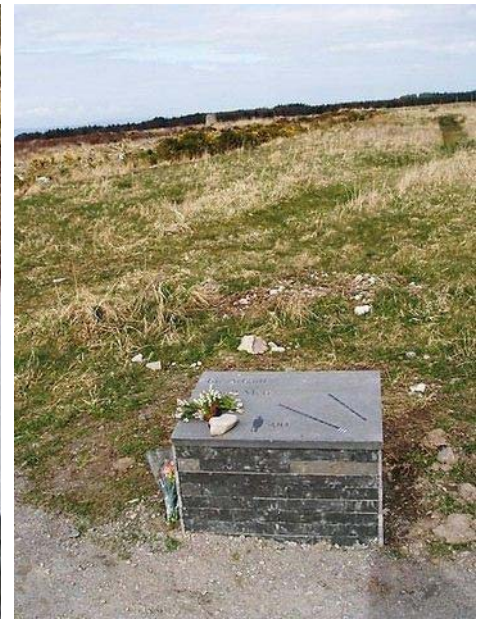


Groups such as the White Cockade Society attend in costume, adding colour to the proceedings.



Left: The Culloden Walkway, leading to the Visitors' Centre. The Walkway is now blending gently into the landscape. Right: The Clan Donnachaidh stone on the Culloden Walkway. This stone was funded by the Clan Donnachaidh Society and Society members. The memorial stones were individually engraved and hand finished. They are made from the finest quality Caithness stone, quarried from the north of Scotland.





This stone marks where the Atholl men stood at the beginning of the battle. The wider view clearly shows the flat open terrain, disastrously chosen as a battlefield by Prince Charles's Adjutant-General, John O'Sullivan. The Prince's army fought heroically, against the odds, but the battle was over in an hour.

The ceremony is held at the memorial cairn, which was erected by Duncan Forbes in 1881. Proceedings begin with the piper playing a lament, and an introduction in Gaelic. The ceremony is mostly in English, but prayers are said in Gaelic. The address is in English. At the conclusion flowers are laid at the cairn. The first wreath is laid by the Gaelic Society of Inverness, the second by the National Trust for Scotland, and then wreaths are laid by any group that so wishes.

Sylvia always lays flowers at the cairn and she also places flowers on the stone marking where the Atholl Brigade stood at the beginning of the battle and on the headstone marking the grave of the Atholl men.

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TARTAN POLY COTTON

Is there any interest in obtaining an order of tartan poly cotton in a Robertson sett? (Duncan and Reid would also be possible if there were interest in the appropriate quarters.) Janet Washington at Claire Charles Designs in Pitlochry would be willing to have some poly cotton in the Robertson tartan manufactured if there were at least 10 people interested in buying some of the material. She would like to have a recommendation for the sett and for someone from the Society to give her a sample of material that could be used to establish the colours in the poly cotton.

The material would be 60 inches wide and would cost £15.00 per metre. It is good quality material that does not pill and it is very crease resistant. The cotton could either be made into a skirt in one of the shop's designs (see www.clairecharlesdesigns.co.uk) or lengths could be purchased for personal use. In addition to skirts, it could be used for other items such as table cloths, shorts – and even, gentlemen, rather dashing pyjamas.

This is something that could be discussed during the Society gathering, if there is enough interest. If a design were established, the clan shop might be able to sell the material in due course.

Robertson tartan silk exists already.

GARDEN OPEN DAY AT AUCHLEEKS HOUSE

If you are visiting the Society gathering in July, you may be interested to note that Auchleeks House gardens are open to the public under Scotland's Gardens Scheme, which raises funds for charities, on Sunday 19 July, the beginning of the week in which the Society events will be held.

Auchleeks House belonged to the Robertsons of Auchleeks, one of the cadet lines of the Robertsons of Struan. The present house was built in 1821, in front of the earlier house. David Dundas Robertson, 15th of Auchleeks, sold the Auchleeks estate in 1962.

The garden is open from 2.00 to 5.30 p.m. Admission costs £4.00. After looking at the garden, you can enjoy one of the homemade teas.

Auchleeks House is in Calvine, on the road to Kinloch Rannoch, so you will need a car to get there. You can see more about the garden and how to find it on:

<http://www.gardensofscotland.org/garden.aspx?id=b68f512b-1fa3-433b-944f-9b7a00f81666>

Auchleeks House is no longer owned by Robertsons and the opening of the garden has no connection with the Clan Donnachaidh Society events. If you have any questions about the Society gathering and AGM, would you contact Ginnie Wilkie, the Secretary, on secretary@clandonna.wanadoo.co.uk.