



# CLAN DONALD MID - EAST A' BHRATACH—THE BANNER



## Regional Commissioner Ramblings

Winter 2011

I apologize on the format for this section in advance. This section will be less thematic and more of a scattershot of information leading up to our last event of the year which is the **Alexandria Christmas walk**.

Our plans for the weekend begin on **3 December** and include a Clan Donald Irish breakfast at Pat Troy's starting at 9:00 a.m. for about one or 1 ½ hours, depending on where we end up in the parade line-up. Pat Troy's is located at 111 North Pitt St. and is very convenient for walking to our starting spot for the parade. We will line up between 10:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. when the parade is set to begin. Everybody who has left over Halloween candy can PLEASE save it and bring it to the parade so we can pass it out to the kids along the way. There is no established dress code for event, however, Clan Donald garb is encouraged. Once many years ago we even marched with some Star Trekkie types dressed as Klingons.

After the parade everybody can shop, rest and refit for the annual **Clan Donald Dinner** which will happen at T.J. Stones in Alexandria. T.J. Stones is located very close to the Alexandria Sheraton Hotel where last year's dinner was held. We will start with a half hour from 4:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. to get settled in and have a drink. We plan on piping in the haggis at 5:00 p.m. and go ahead and order from the menu for dinner. Each table seats up to eight and we will settle the bill table by table. We'll have the normal speeches and plenty of time to socialize followed by a return to the bar at 7:00 p.m. for more libations. T.J. Stones is located on 608 Montgomery St. at the northern end of Alexandria. My State commissioners will be contacting all of our members to get a head count, which needs to

be turned in on the Friday after Thanksgiving. We'll try and post the link to T.J. Stones on the Mid-East website for your convenience. For those looking for a hotel, we are recommending that Clan Donald members stay at the nearby Alexandria Sheraton Hotel.

On the **Dave Rankin** update: Many of you know that Dave had an operation to remove a tumor and some of his intestine. Dave had the surgery over a week ago and on the scale of 1 through 6 his removed tumor was rated as 1 (least serious). Dave will be recovering 4-6 weeks then get some minor surgery followed by another 8-9 weeks more of recovery. Also good news is that Dave will require no chemo or radiation treatments. Dave hopes to see many of his Clan Donald friends at the Alexandria Christmas walk and annual dinner.

Here is an action photo of Jeff Davis from the "Richmond" games now held at Doswell, VA. This valiant effort was rendered on behalf of Clan Donald.



(This too could be you.)

All stalwart Clan Donald champions apply to the Virginia Commissioner for next year's contest.

(continued on page 2)

### In this issue:

Regional Commissioner Ramblings **1-2**

Discovering North Carolina and the Tartan Museum **2-3**

Story Corner: The Doomed Rider **4**

Chesapeake Celtic Festival — Snow Hill Games **5**

(Richmond) Meadow Highland Games **6**

Clan Donald Mid-East Officer Information **7**



## Regional Commissioner Ramblings (cont'd)

Also at Richmond, the Clan was piped onto the field for the parade of the Clans by our newest piper Ian Niday (photo at right). He is a nephew of Cara Lee and John Ean Macdonald and Grandson of Clan Donald pioneer John Lincoln Macdonald (formerly of North Carolina). Ian Niday is a great addition to our regional pipers.

Finally, I'm looking for volunteers. We lack State commissioners for West Virginia and Delaware and a Deputy Commissioner for Mike MacDonald in Maryland. I can personally vouch that Mike is friendly and would love to start breaking in a newbie. Also, on the volunteer front, are the needs of the region. I'm looking for some people to start working the 2013 Clan Donald Annual General Meeting (AGM) planned for Williamsburg, VA. Call or see me at the walk if you are interested.

I've also been asked by one Maryland Saint Andrews member if we can get some volunteers to help out with the Frederick Maryland Games. There were no 2011 games, in part, because they lacked folks to make phone calls, send e-mails and perform some of the admin work. This is the only games that we potentially have left in the middle of the state. If they don't get help we may be stuck traveling to the farthest extremities of the state for all of next year's games.

Hope to see you all at the Christmas walk and your State Commissioners will be contacting you to get a head count and menu choice. ■

Stan Darroch



## Discovering N. Carolina and the Tartan Museum

In early May, Kate and I traveled to western North Carolina to spend the better part of the week discovering new territory. We had been to the Smokies, but had never spent time looking around the towns and cities. Inspired by our 2010 Christmas dinner speaker, Chuck Coburn who runs the Tartan Museum in Franklin, we decided to see what there was to offer.

Our main stop was Asheville. We arrived quite by happenstance on a Sunday when they had a festival. There were local craft booths and live entertainment – ranging from rock bands to belly dancing. I had not done my usual research on a vacation location. We had decided to just go and discover. Well not only is Asheville a college-town with a lively nightlife and arts community and a wide selection of restaurants of all types, it also bills itself as Beer City, USA! A very pleasant surprise. We

took advantage of different restaurants offering different samplings of local brew. I myself am partial to stouts and reds – having discovered McEwans and Guinness long ago – but there were lagers and IPAs of all descriptions also. So diet before you go – or plan it after – but make sure you take advantage of the local “culture” while there.

Asheville has other pleasures, a Vanderbilt mansion and grounds (Biltmore) and the North Carolina Botanical Gardens to name two. North Carolina's furniture making tradition is also well served. There were a number of antique warehouse size locations. We have never seen so much art deco style furniture – at such low prices.

(continued on page 3)



## Discovering N. Carolina & Tartan Museum (cont'd)

It was enjoyable just to walk through and look at it – since our Prius is not really adequate to haul 1930s era armoires and dressers.

About forty-five miles south of Ashville is Franklin – a nice little diversion from the usual trip on the Blue Ridge Parkway. It is not too far out of the way if you are headed to Cherokee, the entrance to the Grant Smokey National Park.



The Tartan Museum itself is a work in progress. Situated on the main street it occupies the main and basement floor of a one story building. The top floor was the shop with the normal selection of clan related glassware, etc. You go downstairs to the museum area.

The museum is not large in that it is contained on a single floor, but it is full of information and it is a value at a mere \$2 per person. There are a number of exhibits of tartan dress, weaponry, and a weaving display. Included is information on Scottish migration and on the connection between Scots in N.C. and the Cherokee. A major feature is a huge display of different tartans – over five hundred of them (see photo below). There are still being tartans created today and the Tartan Museum is still

adding to it collection (hence it being a work in progress).

You can visit their website for more information – they even have a handy tartan search link to use. Go to [www.scottishtartans.org](http://www.scottishtartans.org) and enjoy! Better yet take the trip down to western N.C. and stop in (before you fill up on craft brew). ■

Rick Keller





## Story Corner: The Doomed Rider

A great part of our Highland heritage comes forward to us in the form of stories or fables. For those of you who have children, great-grandchildren, nephews/nieces (or just like story time) this section will be a recurring piece of the Mid-East A' Bhratach—The Banner. This story was selected for the newsletter because we are close to Halloween and it seemed pretty scary... THE DOOMED RIDER!

"Tim Conan is as bonny a river as we have in a' the north country. There's mony a sweet sunny spot on its banks, an' mony a time an' aft hae I waded through its shallows, whan a boy, to set my little scouting-line for the trouts and the eels, or to gather the big pearl-mussels that lie sae thick in the fords. But its bonny wooded banks are places for enjoying the day in—no for passing the night. I kenna how it is; it's nane ol your wild streams that wander desolate through a desert country, like the Avon, or that come rushing down in foam and thunder, ower broken rocks, like the Foyers, or that wallow in darkness, deep, deep in the bowels o' the earth, like the fearful Auldgraunt; an' yet no one o' these rivers has mair or frightfuller stories connected wi' it then the Conan. Ane can hardly saunter over half-a-mile in its course, frae where it leaves Contin till where it enters the sea, without passing over the scene o' some frightful auld legend o' the Kelpie or the Water-wraith. And ane o' the most frightful looking of these places is to be found among the woods of Conan House. Ye enter a swampy meadow that waves wi' flags an' rushes like a cornfield in harvest, an' see a hillock covered wi' willows rising like an island in the midst. There are thick mirk-woods on ilka side; the river, dark an' awesome, an' whirling round an round in mossy eddies, sweeps away behind it; an' there is an auld burying ground, wi' the broken ruins o' an auld Papist kirk, on the tap. Ane can see among the rougher stanes the rose-wrought mullions of an arched window, an' the trough that ance held the holy water. About twa hundred years ago- thae old stories – the building was entire; an' a spot near it, whar the wood now grows thickest, was laid out in a corn-field. The marks o' the furrows may still be seen among the trees.

"A party o' Highlanders were busily engaged, one day in harvest, in cutting down the corn o' that field.; an' just about noon, when the sun shone brightest an' they were busiest in the work, they heard a voice frae the river exclaim, "The hour but not the man has come." Sure enough, on looking around, there was the kelpie stan'in' in what they call a false ford, just in front of the auld kirk. There is a deep black pool both above an' below, but in the ford there's a bonny ripple, that shows, as one might think, but little depth of water; an' just in the middle of that, in a place where a horse might swim stood the kelpie. And it again repeated its words, "The hour but not the man has come," and then flashing through the water like a drake, it disappeared into the lower pool. When the highland folk stood wondering the creature might mean, they saw a



man on horseback come spurring down the hill in hot haste, making straight for the false ford. They could then understand the kelpie's words at once; and four of the stoutest of them sprang oot frae among the corn to warn him of his danger, an' keep him back. An' so they told him what they had seen and heard from the kelpie, an' urged him either to turn back an' take anither road, or stay for an hour or so where he was. But the rider just wadna hear them, for he was both unbelieving an' in haste, an' would have taken the ford had not the Highlanders, determined on saving him whether he would cooperate or not, so they gathered round him an' pulled him from his horse, an' then, to make sure of him, locked him up in the auld kirk. Well, when the hour had gone by—the fatal hour of the kelpie—they flung open the door, and cried to him that he might go along on his journey But there was no answer still; and then they went in, an' found him lying stiff an cauld on the floor, with his face buried in the water of the very stone trough that we may still see among the ruins. His hour had come an' he had fallen in a fit, as "twould seem, head first among the water of the trough, where he had been drowned ---an so ye see, the prophecy of the kelpie had availed nothing. ■



## Chesapeake Celtic Festival — Snow Hill Games

The 22nd Chesapeake Celtic Festival Snow Hill, MD October 1 & 2 went extremely well.

My wife Louise, son Mike Jr., and his Girlfriend Ashley helped set up and Paul & Lucy McKean joined us to help man the tent. Paul carried the Clan Flag in the opening ceremonies on the first day and Mike Jr. and I followed. I'm 4th on right, and Paul is 4th on the left (holding the flag).



The festival opened at 11 a.m. Saturday. At noon, a parade, led by the Ocean City Pipes and Drums and the Snow Hill High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC, marched to the new Festival Stage followed by the Clans for an opening ceremony featuring the Somerset Festival Glee Chorus, whose members performed songs from the Seven Celtic Nations, sung in the Gaelic or dialect of each land. The bagpipes picked up the notes of "Amazing Grace" for a stirring finish to the musical presentation after that the Flowers of the Forest ceremony, the presentation of the Tartans and a bagpipe concert.

Master of Ceremonies was actor Graham Caldwell, known at the festival as Seamus O'Reilly, who told a joke or two in the Pub Tent. The Games got off to a good start and the weather for the first day was pretty good as well.

We had a lot of visitors and had four or five people take membership applications.

There were wine tastings throughout each day. Whiskey tastings and the Tempting Tap provided a continuous flow of imported beer, black and tans, exotic ales, hard cider and mead. The food court offered shepherd's pie, pasties, bridies, fish and chips, highland beef and ice cream, local Chesapeake seafood and funnel cakes. And I might add the Best Smoked Turkey Legs I've ever tasted. And you can't forget the Haggis... The Celtic Marketplace offered a wide selection of imported and hand-crafted wares.

A little side note: Paul lost his Sgian Dubh he hand made while Carrying the flag in the opening ceremonies Saturday and thanks to a good Samaritan turning it in was able to get it returned Sunday.

Sunday opening ceremonies was led the same way but I was the Flag bearer. This was my greeting when Clan Donald was announced. Although Sunday turned out to be a little rainy off and on all day we all still had a great time and we're looking forward to the next games in Calvert County Next Spring.

Until then, best wishes. ■

Michael McDonald

Maryland Commissioner





# CLAN DONALD MID-EAST



Page 6 — Winter 2011

## (Richmond) Meadow Highland Games

The Meadow Highland Games, formerly known as the Richmond Games was a great affair for Clan Donald Mid-East. Regional Commissioner Stan Darroch and Virginia Commissioner Bill Yoder were amongst the people that attended the event. There were people in good numbers who stopped by the tent, including Carl F. McAllister, Clan Donald's oldest Life Member and Clan Donald Grill Master Ian Niday. A highlight was the Virginia Scots Guards Pipes & Drums stopping by the tent and playing a few tunes. Check out the many photos from this great event. ■





## Clan Donald Mid-East Officer Information

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**Check out the Clan Donald Mid-East Website**

**<http://mid-east.clan-donald-usa.org/index.html>**

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