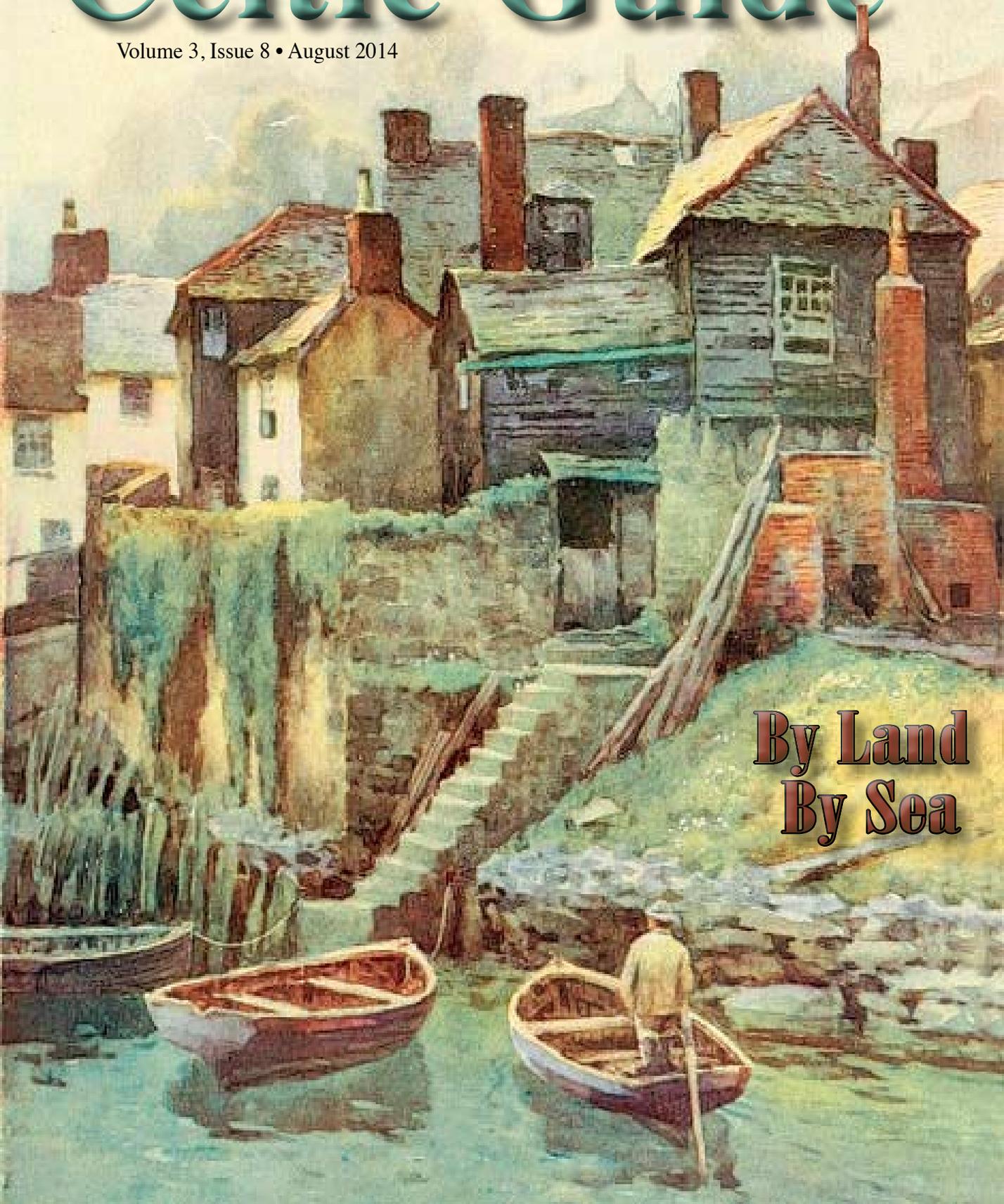


Celtic Guide

Volume 3, Issue 8 • August 2014



**By Land
By Sea**

From the Editor



Our cover art, this month, is an illustration created by artist Ernest William Haslehurst, in 1915. It shows a lakeside village in Cornwall and was drawn very near to the town of Morvah, which translates as “the land by the sea.” This area is also home to many traditions concerning mermaids. For more views of Haslehurst’s artwork, you can access them for free at:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/28609/28609-h/28609-h.htm>

This issue of *Celtic Guide* contains a wide range of variation on our “By Land, By Sea” theme, and a few refer to tales of the selkie, which is a seal that sheds its skin to become human, typically for the cause of love. In fact, though we only occasionally publish fiction works, we have one from a past *Guide* contributor about just such a selkie-related love story. Of course, there are many other interpretations of our August theme ready to please our readers, as always. This theme was suggested to us by a reader and it became obvious, very quickly, that the life of the Celt was intrinsically tied up with adventures both on land and at sea. In fact, the old Gaelic lands of northern Scotland and Ireland were once thought of as a “sea kingdom” all their own. We have two articles dealing with the clan that was most prominent in controlling this realm “By Sea & By Land.”

So we explore a wide range of tales dealing with a connection between the land and the sea and the Celtic people, some fictional, some mythological, some historical.

We are pleased to have some returning authors in this issue, or at least promising stories for future issues. The beginning of the year can take a toll on spare time, especially when everyone is heading to the sea for some relaxation. Life is so much busier in the spring and early summer. Now that the big crunch has passed, we expect our regular authors and some new ones to chime in.

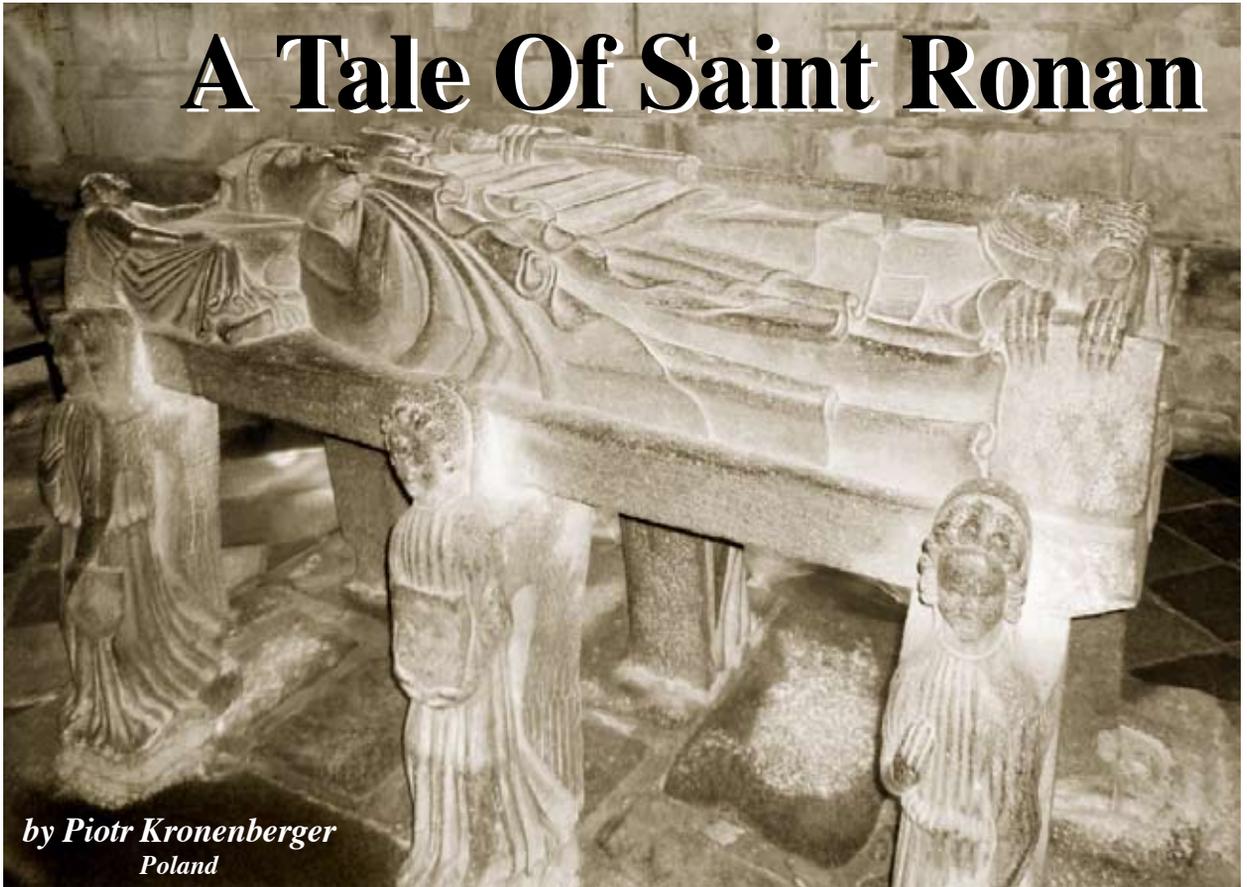
It is our hope to stay in this for the long run, creating a major library of Celtic-oriented tales, historical interpretations, scientific news (DNA, archeology, etc.), and whatever else seems fit to promote Celtic culture . . . in short, to be your *Celtic Guide*.

celticguide@gmail.com

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A Tale Of Saint Ronan



by Piotr Kronenberger
Poland

The tomb of Saint Ronan is located in the chapel of Pénity, constructed in the 15th century by Claude of France, daughter of King Louis XII. She was queen consort of France and duchess regent of Brittany. The eldest daughter of Louis, King of France and Anne, Duchess of Brittany, she was also the first spouse of Francis I of France. Because her mother, Anne, had no surviving sons, Claude became heiress to the Duchy of Brittany, and had the chapel built, which encloses the elaborate tomb of Saint Ronan.

In relation to this month's theme of "By Land, By Sea," I would like to tell you about a certain saint, living in the 6th century, who first preached "by land" – traveling the length and breadth of Ireland, like many of his counterparts back then. Then he left "by sea" and developed a following in another Celtic land.

Saint Ronan was a pious Irish bishop who tirelessly preached the gospel to everyone who would listen. Thanks to his inherent charisma and compassion, Ronan had many disciples.

One day, however, the bishop felt a calling to an even more intimate communion with Jesus Christ, much to the dismay of his flock.

Severing ties with his family, our hero left the Emerald Isle and arrived in Brittany. Here he lived as a hermit to the end of his days.

Over the years, Saint Ronan became just as famous among the native Bretons as he was among his own people. Everyone (especially the poorest) was awed by his knowledge of healing and the miracles he worked.

Some people, though, were jealous of the attention he received. Among those was a certain peasant's wife. This lady accused Ronan of worshipping the devil and kidnapping her only daughter. The saint was taken to court. The legendary Breton king, Gradlon Meur, oversaw the proceedings. During the course of the trial, Ronan managed to prove his innocence. It was discovered that the accuser had kidnapped her own daughter, imprisoned her, and finally strangled her, then tried to blame Ronan in order to discredit him.

Saint Ronan is still venerated in Brittany today, with a yearly feast and procession conducted in his honor in the month of June.

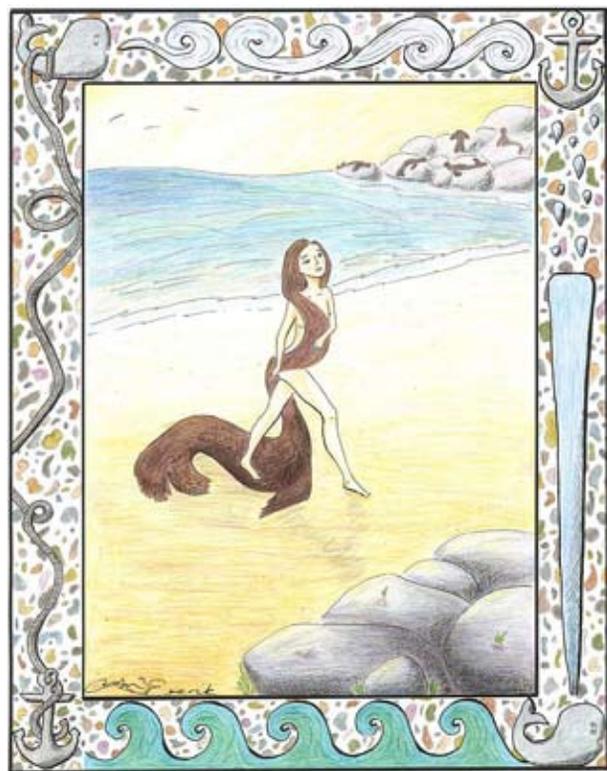
The oldest recorded mention of Ronan's cult dates back to the 11th century.

He is the alleged founder of the Breton village of Locronan (meaning: "Ronan's dwelling"). There stands the chapel of Pénity, containing the tomb of the village patron and the area of Locronan is so picturesque it has been used in at least 30 films!

Even Saint Ronan's name conjures up thoughts of "By Land, By Sea."

The name *Rónán* (anglicized Ronan) is an Irish language male given name meaning "little seal" (*Rón* meaning "seal" and *án* being a diminutive suffix). It most likely refers to a legend that tells of a seal who is warned never to stray too close to the land. When the seal child is swept ashore by a huge wave, she becomes trapped in a human form, known as a "selkie" or seal maiden.

Although she lives as the wife of a fisherman and bears him children, known as "ronans" or



A selkie, as drawn by Carolyn Emerick

little seals, she never quite loses her longing for the sea. Eventually she finds her seal-skin, which the fisherman has hidden, and slips back into the ocean. But, alas, she can't forget her husband and children, and could often be seen swimming close to the shore, keeping a watchful eye on them.

Saint Ronan's own arrival in Brittany harkens back to the seal legend in a strange sort of way.

The story of his appearance in Brittany is fascinating. As the tale goes, some fishermen on the Breton coast were asleep in their boats when they were awakened by a strange disturbance in the water. Suddenly, they saw a curious sight – a rock came sailing towards them, leaving a long, quiet trail behind it as though the waves trembled at its touch. It was garlanded with unknown seaweeds, and exhaled so sweet and strong a scent, that all the air and even the sea was perfumed. On the summit of the rock, a figure knelt in prayer, his head surrounded by a halo, the glory of which illuminated the night.

Of course it was Saint Ronan!

Below is a statue of Saint Ronan from the Locronan church.



Well, now I know how the Irish singer, Ronan Keating, got his name! :)

by Jim McQuiston
USA

Per Mare Per Terras

Our theme, this month, is “By Land, By Sea.” One of the most significant of Scottish clans happens to have the motto of “By Sea, By Land,” or more exactly – *Per Mare, Per Terras*. This clan is the MacDonalds of Sleat, located on the Isle of Skye, Scotland.

The significance of the clan is tied up in a very complex tale of its origin and fall from power (though the clan still exists today).

Furthermore, its history is also the history of some of those families carrying the names Houston, Hutchinson, Martin, McQueen, Harris, and many variations of these names, along with my own surname with all its spellings. In fact, the list of names who were “septs” or branches springing from the MacDonalds of Sleat, and particularly from the very first chief of this clan, is very long.

Certainly, those descended from this man, or at least his reign and legacy, must number in the hundreds of thousands across the world. We begin this tale with background on this man’s family and the reasons why he became catapulted into this position of power.

Back in the early 1400s, one Alexander MacDonald, Lord of the Isles, was one of the few noblemen left standing after the once-imprisoned King James I of Scotland took revenge on those who let him languish in an English prison for many years. Alexander, in fact, served on the jury that convicted and sentenced to death James’s own relatives who played a role in his extended exile.



Lord of the Isles, by McIan

This didn’t stop the two leaders of the powerhouses of Scotland (the Stewarts and MacDonalds) from being at odds with each other even though they were very close “cousins.”

Alexander was captured and imprisoned, but then freed by the king. Not content to see the MacDonald power be weakened, he took up arms again, and was again captured. This time he had to submit to the king in his underwear with a sword pointed at his own throat. Once again, he was released.

Upon the death of James, Alexander became Earl of Ross, a very large section of Scotland. He moved the MacDonald seat from Islay to the castle of Dingwall, located a distance below Loch Ness. There, most likely in 1436, was born his second son, Hugh, or in Gaelic, *Uisdean*.

Alexander’s first son, John, ascended to the titles of Lord of the Isles and Earl of Ross, though he eventually relinquished both of these during the Scottish king’s mission to subdue the Highland clans.

But before this would happen, John gave the Isle of Skye to his younger brother Hugh. The seat on Skye was Dunscaith Castle, which Hugh almost certainly took from the hands of the MacAskill family by force.

There is legend told in an earlier issue of the *Celtic Guide* of this event and the ensuing revenge apparently taken on Hugh's own son, also named John. It appears that all of this younger John's children were killed by a MacAskill nurse in retaliation for the taking of Dunscaith and the killing of so many in her family. And so, Hugh's, or *Uisdean's* reign as Chief of the MacDonalds of Skye began in violence and tragedy, and it continued that way at least for his six sons.

In official MacDonald records it is stated simply, but definitively, that this younger John MacUisdean MacDonald, died with no progeny. In a MacAskill legend is found the story of the revenge taken on the chief of Dunscaith. John is the only person this legend can be attributed to, and since he died "with no progeny," this seems to be the way this story, and his family, ended.

But beforehand, his father, Hugh, suddenly found himself as the leader of Clan Donald once his own brother John, last official Lord of the Isles and Earl of Ross, submitted to the Scottish king, and retired as a pensioner to Dundee.

Hugh's father had a long-standing feud with the Earl of Orkney, and Hugh, in 1460, set out to settle that score. Some say he killed the earl, while others say he simply defeated the earl and killed many of his men.

In those days a coroner was not just someone who investigated the cause of a death. More to the point, he would make sure the king got his more than fair share of whatever monies were left in an estate.

George Gunn was the Coroner or Crowner of Caithness, an area located in the northeast corner of Scotland, directly across from the Orkneys.

Also, in those days, if a man was guilty of killing another, he could receive remission by paying a certain fee to the coroner.

It appears that Hugh traveled from Orkney directly to Caithness to seek remission from George Gunn. While there, he fell in love with George's daughter and had another son by her, despite his own wife and children still at home on Skye; Hugh appears to have had a daughter by his first wife, Finvola, along with his son John.

His child in Caithness was named Donald Gallach MacUisdean, for *Gallach* was a Viking name given to Caithness. Donald was raised there but eventually took over Dunscaith, upon the death of his brother, John MacUisdean.

Donald's reign was short-lived, as he was assassinated by another half-brother – for you see, Hugh was such a rogue he had fathered at least six sons by six different women, leading to an amazing amount of fratricide within the MacUisdean wing of the MacDonald family.

All six sons died violent deaths. Only Donald Gallach had progeny that could have carried on the House of Sleat. Another half-brother, also named Donald, was born and raised on the Isle of Harris. After his death, his family took on the surname Harris, though a few used the *MacUisdean* patronymic. Some of these moved back to the Isle of Skye, to the Trotternish Peninsula, to live near their "cousins." The small village of MhicChuithean on Trotternish is thought by some to have been founded by this family, and sits just a short distance up the road from Caisteal Uisdean, the very last castle built on the Isle of Skye.

MhicChuithean has been translated as McQueen and yet several McQueens, as well as men of the Harris and Martin names, along with some of the Houston and Hutchinson names, match DNA with those of the MacUisdean name in its more modern forms.

The first-known Skye Martin was also a member of Clan Uisdean. Based on family legends and on modern DNA research, it appears at least some members of the families with various spellings of MacDonald, McConnell, MacUisdean, Houston, Hutchinson, Martin, Harris and McQueen all came from the same

bowl. There are many other surnames whose history matches this, and who have matching DNA, and so the seed of Uisdean, or Hugh of Sleat, is spread across the wide world, despite its dangerous beginnings.

The treachery within the family continued as the pie grew smaller and smaller due to the Stewart kingship aided by Campbell complicity. Most clans, including the Sleat MacDonalds, were forced to fight with each other over the small amount of spoils left.

Another branch of Clan Donald reestablished a base on the more southerly isles of Kintyre and Islay, and over in County Antrim, Northern Ireland. This branch became known as Clan Donald South, while Hugh's family remained known as Clan Donald North, seated on Skye.

The two branches most often maintained mutual support as they made their last great stand in County Antrim against the English, who were being aided by native Irish. The title of Chief of Sleat eventually became an Irish peerage title, rather than one of its native Isle

of Skye, Scotland, origin. Hugh died in 1498, most likely at Paisley Abbey, near Glasgow, and was buried at a place called Sand, most likely Clachan Shanda, on the Isle of North Uist. His brother John, last MacDonald Lord of the Isles, died at Dundee in 1502, and was buried at Paisley Abbey. Hugh was followed by Donald Gallach and by several successive leaders/descendants named Donald.

Today, Sir Ian MacDonald is Chief of Sleat, and carries the patronymic *MacUisdean*. The MacDonalds of Sleat, or *Clan Uisdean*, still exists today with the motto of *Per Mare, Per Terras* on their shield, as a remembrance of their great Gaelic sea kingdom, which, at times, spanned from Caithness in the northeast of Scotland, to Antrim, in Northern Ireland, and encompassed the Isle of Skye and many other islands in the Hebrides. They certainly ruled by sea and by land – *Per Mare, Per Terras*.

In America, a clan society, Clan Uisdean, USA, Inc., celebrates its MacUisdean origins in this sea kingdom from so very long ago.



Paris-based photographer Emmanuel Coupe won £10,000 for his picture taken on the Isle of Skye

written by Victoria Roberts
USA

The Crofter



Chaisteil Maol and the Kyle of Lochalsh; photo by Cameron Morrison, Scotland

*THI tha chomhnadh nan ard,
Tiuirich duinn do bheannachd aigh,
Iomchair leinn air bharr an t-sal,
Iomchair sinn gu cala tamh,
Beannaich ar sgioba agus bat,
Beannaich gach acair agus ramh,
Gach stadh is tarruinn agus rac,
Ar siuil-mhora ri crainn ard*

It's hard to imagine what life might have been like "back in the day." From what we've read from history books, our ancestors did not have an easy life. I wonder how many of us could make it if we were thrown back into a time when men and women had to live off nature's bounty to survive. Generations before us worked, and they worked darned hard.

My husband's grandmother and great-grandmother had a dairy farm. I recall my husband's grandmother telling me stories about having to get up to work before the crack of dawn and going late to bed. "Milking, always milking," she'd say. There wasn't time for anything else.

**O THOU who pervadest the heights,
Imprint on us Thy gracious blessing,
Carry us over the surface of the sea,
Carry us safely to a haven of peace,
Bless our boatmen and our boat,
Bless our anchors and our oars,
Each stay and halyard and traveller,
Our mainsails to our tall masts**

Although many of our ancestors worked the land with solid ground beneath their feet, there were some men who decided to make their livelihood from the sea. Who would've thought seaweed was a profitable commodity?

Kelp is large, brown seaweed that typically has a long, tough stalk with a broad frond divided into strips. Some kinds grow to a very large size and form underwater "forests" that support a large population of animals. The soda ash, also known as sodium carbonate (residue left over after the seaweed is burned), was often used in the production of soap, glass, and linen.

Harvesting soda ash was no easy feat. The laborers waded in frigid water that was waist

deep or leaned over the water from boats with sickles. The weeds were piled on the shore and once they dried, the kelp was burned.



Kelp ready for the harvest

During the early 19th century, England was at war and often regularly cut off from supplies of soda ash from the cheaper Mediterranean countries. As a result, Scotland's kelp industry boomed. At the height of the kelp demand, a fortune was to be made by the lairds. But by this time, waves of people were immigrating to America, which meant fewer kelp workers were on hand to produce a profit. In turn, the English raised the cost of immigration to be an exorbitant

amount of money so that people couldn't afford to take the journey across the pond.

In order to satisfy supply and demand, the lairds had to maximize their resources. They also had to re-boost the economy and try to encourage people to stay and devote their time to kelp. The lairds realized that the best means to accomplish the task were to take away common holdings. Gaels were allotted individual strips of land and a share in a common grazing ground. By limiting the amount of lands that one family held and by charging high rent on that ground, the island lairds forced their tenants to work the kelp to survive.

Hence, crofting was born...

But kelp was not the only staple in Scotland that kept the economy moving. In northeast Scotland, lairds tried their hand at linen growing. Coastal fishing was also being embedded into the culture during that time. But there was one more promising staple. Care to render a guess?

Whisky distillation. And that's another topic entirely. Excuse me while I pour myself a wee dram. Slàinte!

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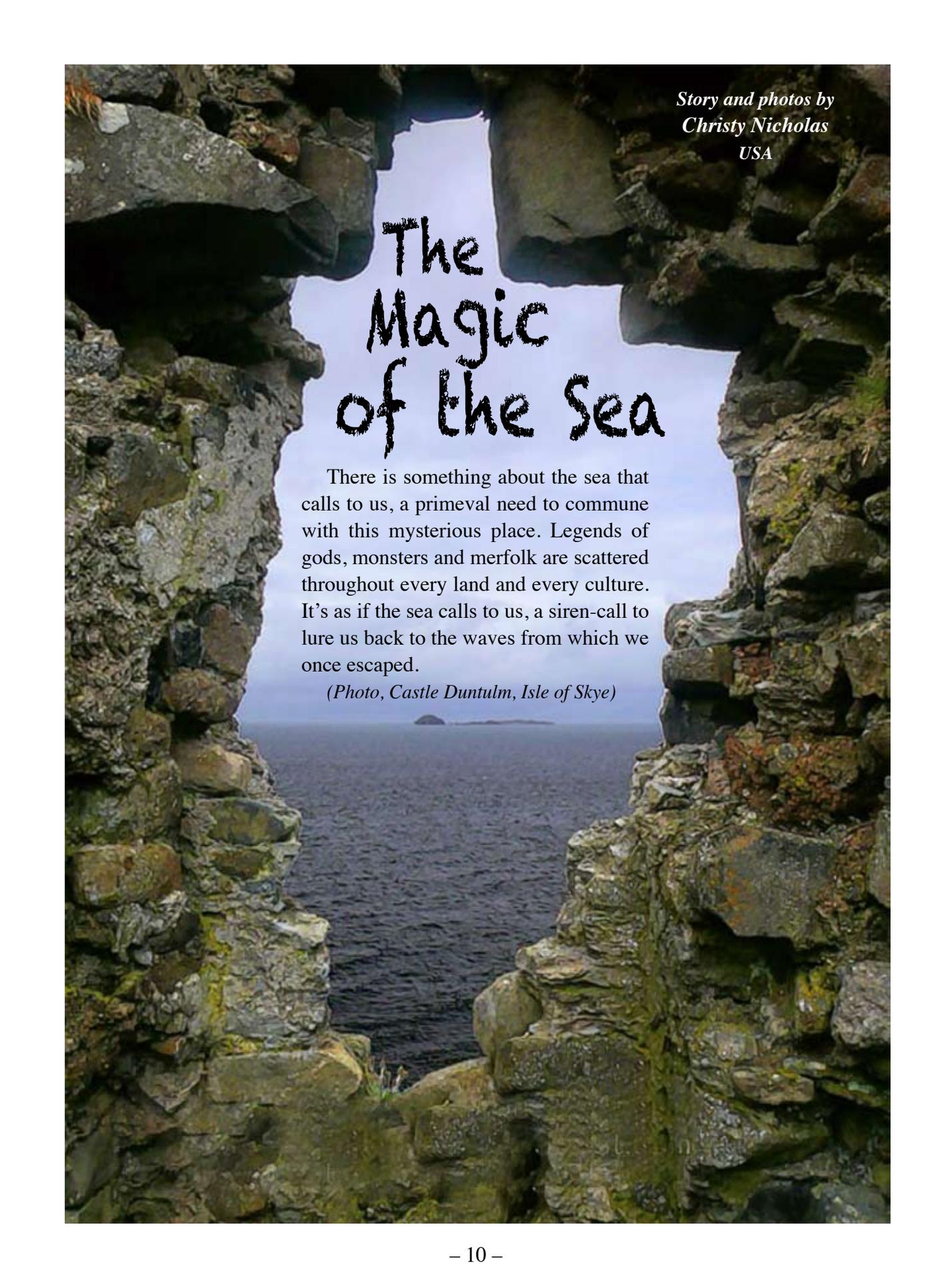
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VICTORIA ROBERTS

A photograph of a stone archway leading to the sea. The archway is made of rough, grey stone blocks, some of which are covered in green moss. The sea is visible through the archway, and a small island is visible in the distance. The sky is a pale, overcast blue. The text is overlaid on the image.

*Story and photos by
Christy Nicholas
USA*

The Magic of the Sea

There is something about the sea that calls to us, a primeval need to commune with this mysterious place. Legends of gods, monsters and merfolk are scattered throughout every land and every culture. It's as if the sea calls to us, a siren-call to lure us back to the waves from which we once escaped.

(Photo, Castle Duntulm, Isle of Skye)



This 1595 “Ortelius Map of Europe” clearly shows a round island, named Brazil, to the west of Ireland (see red arrow). This is only one of many early maps showing an isle named Brazil or Hy-Brasil, located off the western coast. How so many maps of reasonable accuracy could show this island and it not actually exist is still a mystery, unless . . .

We have all heard tales of civilizations lost to the mighty waves of the ocean, such as the mighty Atlantis. Tales of *Tír na nÓg* may have been told by your fireside. But how many have heard of Hy-Brasil?

Hy-Brasil was a land off the west coast of Ireland. It is traditionally cloaked in mist, except for once every seven years. Seven is a mystical number in Irish lore. The name Hy-Brasil is thought to come from the Irish *Uí Breasail*, which means the Descendants of the Clan of the Blessed. This clan traditionally lived in the northeast of Ireland, perhaps in County Donegal. The name *Breasail* was also given to the High King of the World, who held court on the island of eternal happiness.

Hy-Brasil has been shown on various maps from the 14th and 15th centuries, during the time of great explorations. Even in the 19th century, it was on the British Admiralty charts. It was said that a man named O’Ley had been kidnapped and taken to the island in the 17th century. Several captains around that time, Captain John Nisbet and Captain Alexander Johnson, both claim to have landed on an island in that area. Irish fishermen claim to have sailed to the island even as late as the 20th century.

Is there truly an island out there, perhaps one that does disappear and reappear? As much as this flies against the logic of science, I believe there is more to the world than we currently can know.

Celtic lands are literally surrounded by islands, as shown in the photograph of Duntulm Castle, located on the Isle of Skye, and in the photo below, near the Isle of Lewis. Many smaller islands are uninhabited and many are as yet unexplored to any great degree.

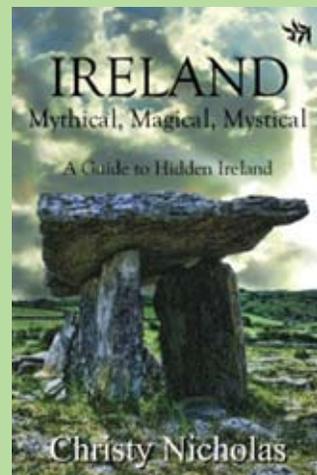
The sea is still a mysterious, unknown place, and there are many things we discover every year that seemed like magic just a few years before.

Perhaps Hy-Brasil is one of those places, as yet unknown to modern science, waiting for us to be strong enough, mature enough, to appreciate an island of eternal happiness.

Do you find yourself drawn to the magic of the Emerald Isle?

Would you like to see places beyond the typical tourist traps?

Come join me on a journey through the mists of legend, into the hidden places of mystery.



Written by **Christy Nicholas**

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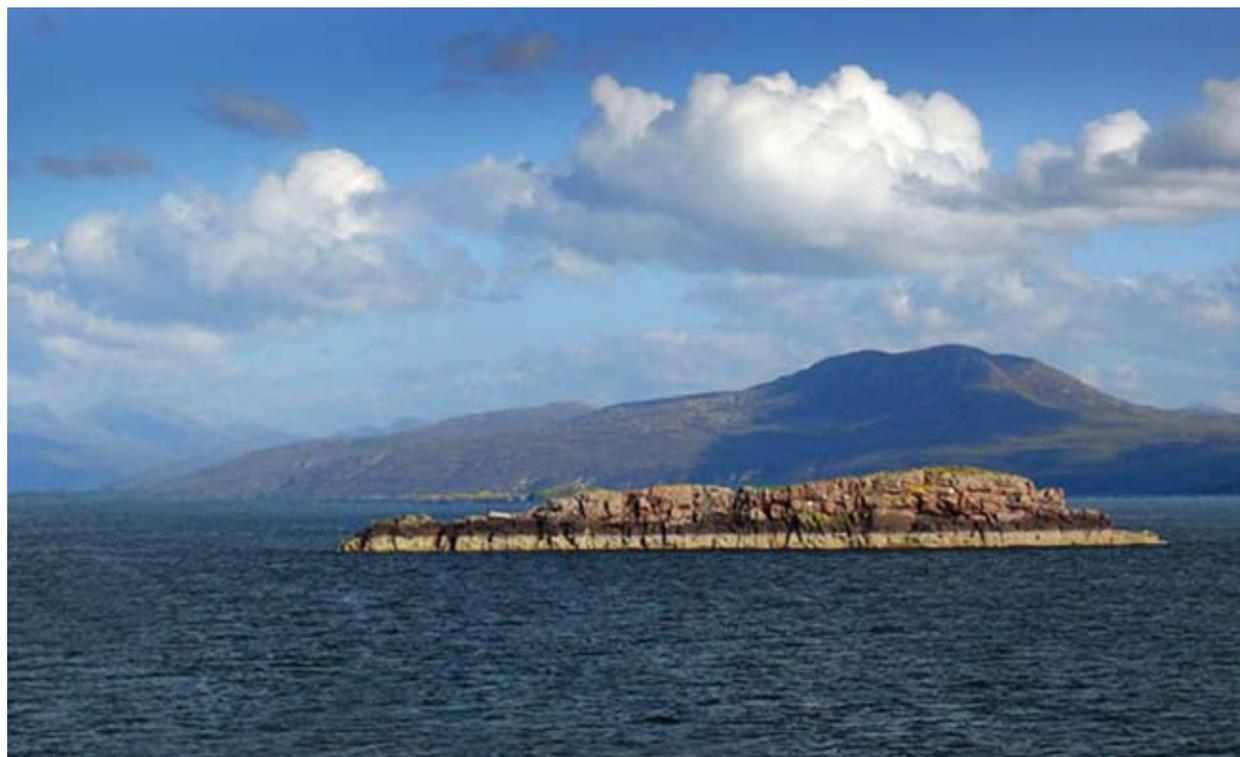
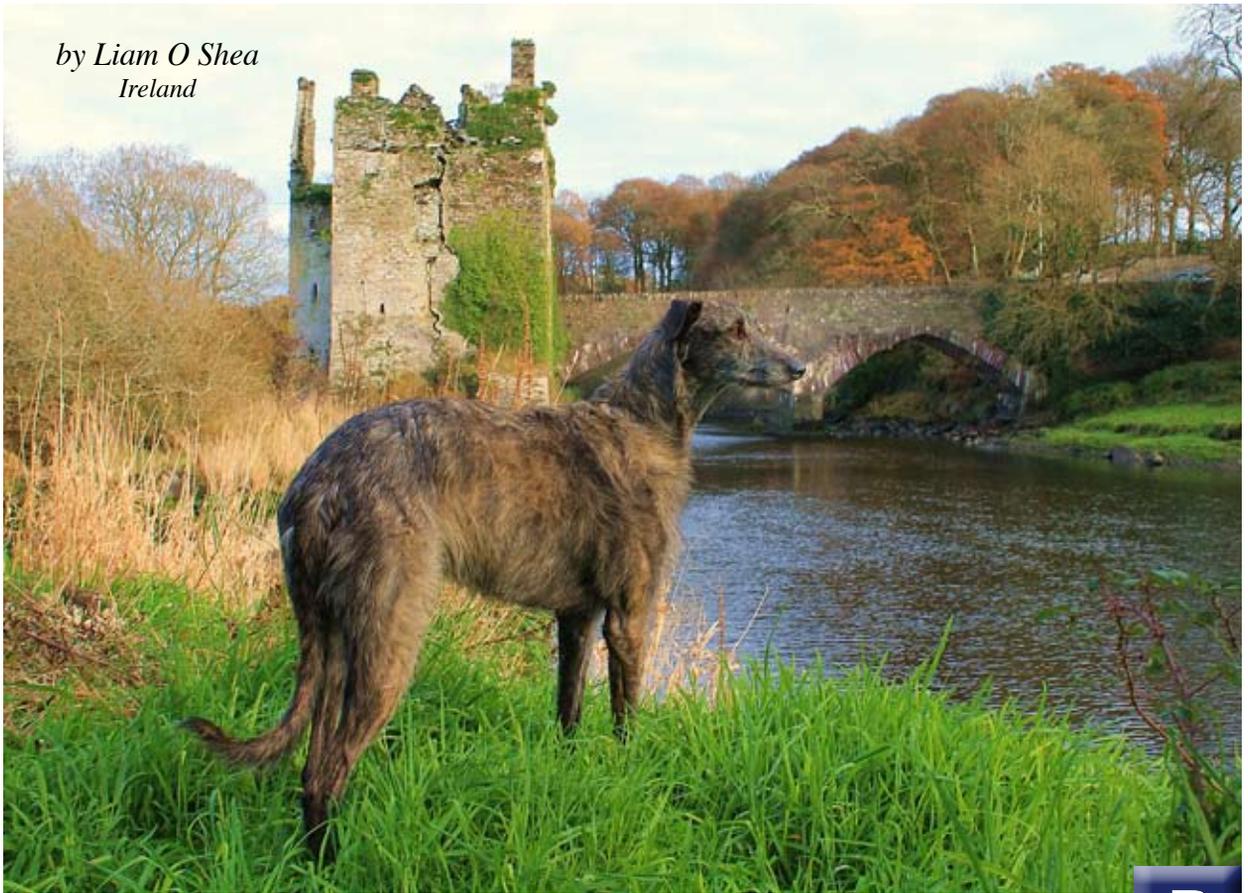


Photo taken on the ferry ride between Ullapool and Stornoway, Isle of Lewis

by Liam O Shea
Ireland



Here is Celtic Guide mascot, Obie, at a castle on a river close to the mouth of Cork harbour. Carrigadrohid (Carraig an Droichid, or "The rock of the bridge") is a village in County Cork, Ireland, situated on the north bank of the River Lee (Laoi). Carrigadrohid Castle stands on a rock in the middle of the river, adjacent to the bridge which gives the village its name. It was erected in the 15th century by the MacCarthys of Muskerry, with an extension to the east and an annex to the north being added in subsequent centuries. It was besieged by Parliamentary forces following the Battle of Macroom, and Boetius MacEgan, the Bishop of Ross, was hanged by the reins of his own horse outside the castle, having refused to implore the Irish garrison to surrender to the Cromwellian army.

The MacCarthys were dispossessed and the castle ended up in the hands of the Bowen family. It has been in ruins since the late 18th century. In recent years, a local group has been formed with the aim of preserving the castle.

by Jim McQuiston
USA

McNeilledge

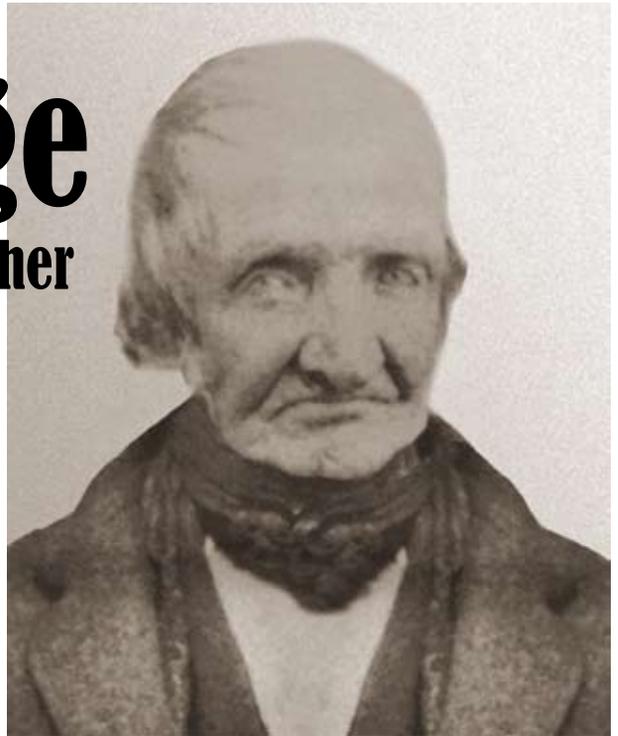
Sailor/Farmer/Cartographer

In the small tourist town of Port Dover, Ontario, Canada, exists a wonderful maritime museum known as the Port Dover Harbour Museum, which is dedicated to those souls who plied the waters of Lake Erie – some of the most dangerous waters in the world. These waters could be considered dangerous just for the enormous number of sunken vessels that have littered the bottom - estimated to be between 6,000 and 25,000. Loss of life estimates range from 30,000 souls and up.

There are a few reasons for this scary record. One is that, being the most shallow of the Great Lakes, Lake Erie can blow up a gale very, very quickly. I have personally seen a calm day turn into a boater's nightmare within five minutes or less . . . and more than once has this happened. Another reason is that in the early days of settlement in this part of North America, Lake Erie was a main thoroughfare for moving people and freight to the west. Ships out of eastern U.S. and Canadian ports would regularly head to ports in the west. Just the sheer number of passenger ships during this time made for a great potential for tragic accidents to happen.



Finally, particularly near Port Dover, there are shallows caused by a long stretch of peninsula known as Long Point. These shallows can be



Alexander McNeilledge

deceiving and have managed to run many ships aground until the time they were better charted. They are so dangerous, in fact, they've been nicknamed the "Gold Coast" for all the riches-laden ships that met their end nearby.

One man who went a long way in charting the dangers of Lake Erie was Alexander McNeilledge, born in Greenock, Scotland, on November 8, 1791, to a seafaring family.

Alexander, by the age of nine, was already serving as a cabin boy on his father's ship, the *Pandora*. By age 31, he had worked his way up to captain of the brig *Saunders* and began to ply waters all around the world, including China and East India.

McNeilledge had many adventures during his years at sea, from running blockades to smuggling gold, to outwitting pirates. Finally, in 1829, he made a visit to Dover Mills to visit his brother. Dover Mills was the forerunner to Port Dover. By the following year, Alexander had quit the seafaring life (or so he thought) and began serving as a bookkeeper for his brother's financial ventures. Within six years he decided to purchase land north of Port Dover to create

a farming town, which he named Greenock for his birthplace in Scotland.

The old sailor, it seemed, had gone from sea to land. But slowly he left more and more of the farm management to his wife and son, as he was drawn to the docks of Port Dover.

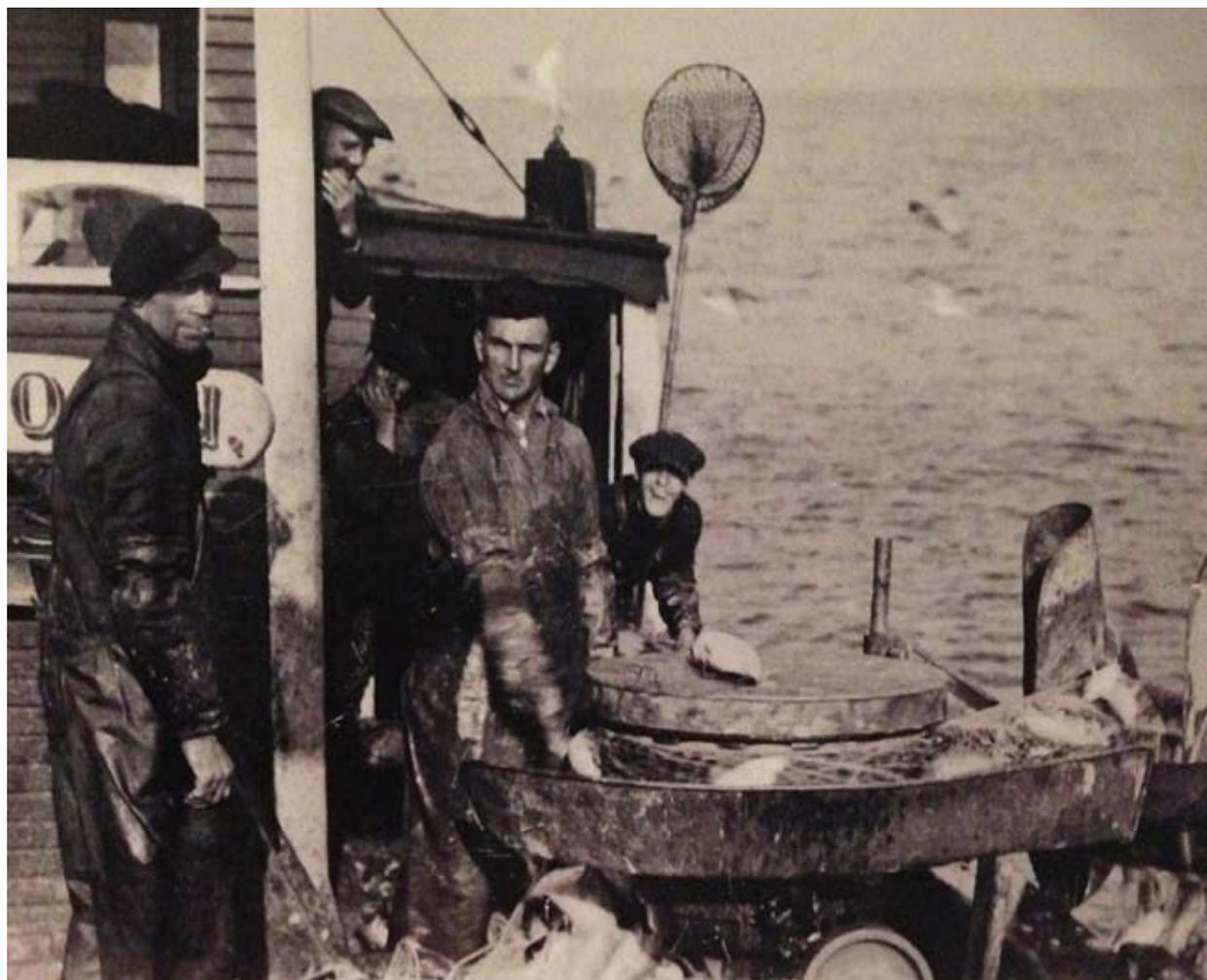
Perhaps due to the many wrecks he heard about on the northern shores of Lake Erie, he began charting the lake by 1840, and produced the first trustworthy charts and hints about how to navigate its northern waters. He published a book in 1848, still available today, entitled *Sailing Directions And Remarks Accompanied With A Nautical Chart Of The North Shore Of Lake Erie*.

An excerpt from his book shows the great extent to which he went in guiding lake captains,

pilots and navigators to safe harbor at one port along the northern coast:

“In the spring of the year you will generally find a strong current going out and it will be necessary to keep good canvas on the vessel, so as to stem the current – and entering the pier, have your hands stationed and your main peak ready to dip; also your main sheet manned, ready to ease off and haul aft, as occasion requires.”

With his heart still out at sea, Alexander McNeilledge made daily trips to the docks, skippered many vessels, and was involved in many of the operations around the Port Dover harbor. He died in 1872, though his legacy of helping so many others stay safe has lived on.



Port Dover fishermen from the not-too-distant past who no doubt benefitted from McNeilledge's work.

Gaelic Descriptions of the Battle of Harlaw

by Dr. Ian Olson
Aberdeen, Scotland



The Harlaw plateau and the monument to the battle, as seen from the west

EDITOR’S NOTE: Perhaps no Scottish battle has created so much controversy as the Battle of Red Harlaw, which took place in July 1411. Dr. Ian Olson joins us for the first time from Aberdeen, Scotland, to discuss the known Gaelic versions of the battle’s history. We are pleased to have his experience in Scottish ethnology to help us better understand this watershed event in Scotland’s history.

A number of problems arise when considering the ‘atrocious’ battle on the plateau of Harlaw which brought to a bloody halt an invasion of the Scottish mainland in the summer of 1411 – an invasion by sea and by land of a huge, battle-hardened army, commanded by Donald, second Lord of the Isles, ostensibly to gain the Earldom of Ross and the Lordship of Skye – a gamble thwarted by a government army led by the Earl of Mar.

The Missing Records

The first problem is that apart from formal

charters, there are no surviving written records of the Lordship, as a later writer was to regret bitterly in his 1912 *Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in the Advocates’ Library and Elsewhere in Scotland*. Donald Mackinnon, in an appendix headed “Gaelic MSS. Lost or Missing”, wrote:

“During the administration of the Lords of the Isles, records seem to have been pretty regularly kept. This department, we are told, was in charge of MacDuffie or McPhee of Colonsay. These would, in part, be written in Gaelic. The disappearance of these records is a great loss not merely to the history of the West Highlands but to the history of Scotland.”

The Lordship of the Isles was eventually forfeited in 1493, and the powers of its last Lord removed. This resulted in a state of complete anarchy, setting in train clan conflicts, a process which appears to have resulted not only in the loss of the records of the Lordship’s administration, but also the greater part of the ancient Gaelic literature.

The Contemporary Accounts of the Invasion

Thus contemporary or near-contemporary accounts of the conflict are provided mainly by surviving Lowland mediaeval chronicles, written in Latin. [A language, incidentally, that Donald would most likely have used. Richard II even offered him a six year safe conduct to attend Oxford, but records do not show that he took it up – not surprisingly, as he was at the time fully occupied as de facto Lord of the Isles.]

There is only one contemporary Gaelic account. Written in the Irish *Annals of Loch Cé: A Chronicle of Irish Affairs from A.D. 1014 to A.D. 1590*, it stated firmly that in 1411 there was:

“A great victory by Mac Dhomhail of Alba over the Foreigners of Alba; and MacGilla-Eoin [Maclean] of Mac Dhomhail’s people was slain in the counterwounding of that victory.”

This is an interesting certainty of victory, for the Latin chroniclers were absolutely sure of one thing – the outcome of a hideous, day-long sloggish match, that left some 3,000 dead and dying in the Harlaw fields, was “uncertain.” As a much later Scots ballad was to agree:

“ye could scare tell wha had won”.

The Irish Connection

An Irish connection was doubly important in this case. The Lowland chroniclers all agreed that Donald invaded with “10,000” troops, though doubt has been cast in the past about this extraordinary size. But Clan Donald had much earlier “seeded” itself into Antrim, and for the Lordship of the Isles, this not only served as a useful place of refuge but as an outlet for the surplus military potential of the Lordship.

Many of these mercenaries, termed *gallóglagh* or gallowglasses by the Irish, had settled as a more or less permanent military caste in Ireland before 1400, but the annals show a constant traffic across the North Channel thereafter.

As a result of this, the Lords of the Isles had an enormous potential reservoir of experienced fighting men on which to draw. This may explain, in part at least, their ability to put on the field armies which, in terms of numbers and expertise, often matched those at the command of the Crown itself, which makes it highly believable that as many as 10,000 men did accompany Donald to Harlaw.

These corps of mail-clad, battleaxe-wielding, heavy infantry were formidable, all fighting on foot regardless of rank, and notorious for being especially effective against mounted opponents. Donald’s army consisted of no assembly of lightly-armed Islanders – it was, instead, both formidable and battle-hardened. In other words he had invaded with a highly dangerous and virtually unstoppable force, but a force with major, problematic requirements for supply and reward, a force, furthermore, which had to achieve results before the harvest called its men home.

There are later accounts that the army was first assembled at Ardtornish in Morvern before sailing to Strome. With ships and galleys capable of holding between 300 and 50 men, some 100 sails would have embarked there to march on Dingwall, seize its castle and occupy Ross. How Donald’s army then ravaged its way across and down through the Garioch until blocked at Harlaw, some fourteen miles from the international port of Aberdeen, a rich city whose sacking would reward his troops, is another story.

It is worth pointing out at this stage that there are no contemporary accounts of the composition, armament or experience of Mar’s government army. Despite the romantic imagining of the likes of Walter Scott and his followers that it consisted of an outnumbered force of well-armed shining knights, “better armed and disciplined”, “with their banners and penoncelles waving”, “with levelled spears, and ponderous maces and battleaxes”, there are in fact *none*.

The Much Later Accounts

The second even greater problem in dealing with the battle of Harlaw is that there is a gap of some 300 and more years before a much later set of accounts begin to appear from either side.

On the Lowland side, the mediaeval chroniclers had described it as chaos. Due to Mar's incompetence, troops were flung in disorder as they arrived, with unnecessary loss of life, into an "atrocious" shambles. With one exception, (Irvine of Drum) the leaders had been nobles from "beyond the Tay." But the very much later Lowland writers recounted enthusiastically the opposite, an organized, well-dressed and ordered force, led this time by the nobles of North-East Scotland.

The Red and Black Books of Clanranald

Although the Gaels were eventually given a somewhat variable account of the battle in the late seventeenth century by the "Sleat historian," (most likely an amateur historian, a Captain Uisdean MacDonald from North Uist), this was in English. It was not until the early eighteenth century for the only prose descriptions of the Battle of Harlaw in Scottish Gaelic to appear, in the *Red and Black Books of Clanranald*. As already mentioned, after the Lordship of the Isles was forfeited in 1493 and its territory dismembered, there was a deliberate and thorough destruction of its physical and cultural heritage. But although the *Books* were written after the Lordship was long gone, they were part of a literary tradition begun centuries earlier, and contained material which was certainly composed and written down well within the period of the Lordship.

The Red and Black Books – neither are actual books – consist of manuscripts written on paper by the professional poets and historians to the old Highland nobility who composed them in a literary dialect known as "Classical Gaelic."

Most importantly, they contain a "History of Clan Donald," which includes Donald's actions at Harlaw. *The Red Book of Clanranald*

was compiled by Niall MacMhuirich of South Uist, a member of the family that had provided poets and chroniclers to the Clan Donald and Clanranald chiefs. The *Black Book* has a number of authors, in particular Christopher Beaton, Gille Críost Mac Bheathadh, a member of a Gaelic learned family who made the *Black Book* as a copy of the *Red Book* for his own use.

Both sets of manuscripts, MCR39 and MCR40, are currently held by the National Museum of Scotland; there are no copies of either in the National Library.

There is also considerable doubt as to whether the "*Red Book*" is in fact the original *Red Book* – the *Leabhar Dearg* of Clanranald which was said to have been lent to James Macpherson for the Ossianic poems it held. The *Red Book* manuscripts held by the National Museum have thus been described alternatively as the "*Little Book*." Although the original was said to have been returned to Clanranald, it was also claimed to have been taken thereafter by emigrants to Australia, where in the 1930s a woman said she owned this book – but unfortunately could not be persuaded to show it to scholars.

The Mistranslation

A Reverend Donald Macintosh made a transcript and English translation of the historical portions of the *Red Book* which was used by various writers such as Walter Scott, but the best known transcriptions and translations of the *Black* and *Red Books* appear in the second volume of the 1894 *Reliquiae Celticae*, a collection of "texts, papers and studies in Gaelic literature and philology" initiated by the Reverend Alexander Cameron and edited after his death by Alexander MacBain and John Kennedy.

The only reference in this edition to Donald of Isla at the battle of Harlaw in the *Black Book* contains the phrase:

"Do bhrisd se cath gaifech ar Dhiúc Murchadh."

This was translated only as, "He fought

the battle of Garioch or Harlaw against Duke Murdoch.”

Leaving aside the error that the duke was not Murdoch, but of Albany, this translation was worrying, for it gave no expression to *bhrisd* – a reference to “breaking,” and it should really be rendered as “He broke – i.e. won - the battle of Garioch over Duke Murdoch,” a no small change in history. Furthermore, the Gaelic in the *Red Book* reads:

“*Do brisd se cath Gaifech cairfech ar diuc Murchadh . . .*”

Again, this would literally be, “He broke the battle of Garioch against Duke Murdoch,” but the scribe has also qualified the battle as “*cairfech*.” This will be the Irish Gaelic adjective *gáibhtheach*, with its meanings of “dangerous, terrible, fierce, eager, exaggerating, costly, distressed, pitiful, plaintive.” (It survives in Modern Irish as *gáifeach*).

In other words, this comes close to describing the battle as a Pyrrhic victory, and offers a number of possible outcomes for Donald:

- “He won the costly Battle of Harlaw against Duke Murdoch.”
- “He won a Pyrrhic victory over Duke Murdoch at the Battle of Harlaw.”
- “He won the fiercely fought/terrible Battle of Harlaw against Duke Murdoch.”

These versions are a long way from claiming that Donald merely “fought” the Battle of Harlaw, and they confirm the opinions of the Sleat historian and of Macdonald historians in general, that he did indeed have a victory there, although at a terrible cost. Nevertheless, they have remained mistranslated until now, the *Reliquiae Celticae* version even being used by a Gaelic speaker when addressing the unveiling of the monument to the battle on the field of Harlaw in 1914.

Thus, the two Gaelic accounts of the battle claim that Donald was the victor at Harlaw, although the *Red Book* warned that the victory was most likely “Pyrrhic” – gained as a result of terrible loss.



The Red Book of Clanranald

The actual outcome was, however, both complex and tragic – neither the Lordship of the Isles nor the earldom of Mar were to survive the century - with reality eventually becoming obscured by myths.

In 1896, in their monumental, three-volume history *The Clan Donald*, the authors, the Reverends Macdonalds, in the end warned us:

“Trustworthy accounts of this famous fight there are none. Lowland historian and ballad composer, as well as Highland seanachie, described what they believed must and should have happened.”

The Lowland historian of the Irvine of Drum family went even further in 1998:

“Much has been written about that battle, and some of it is pure fiction.”

Sources: From my previous accounts of the battle:

Bludie Harlaw. Realities, Myths, Ballads (Edinburgh, John Donald, 2014). Hardback. 192 pp. ISBN: 9781906566760

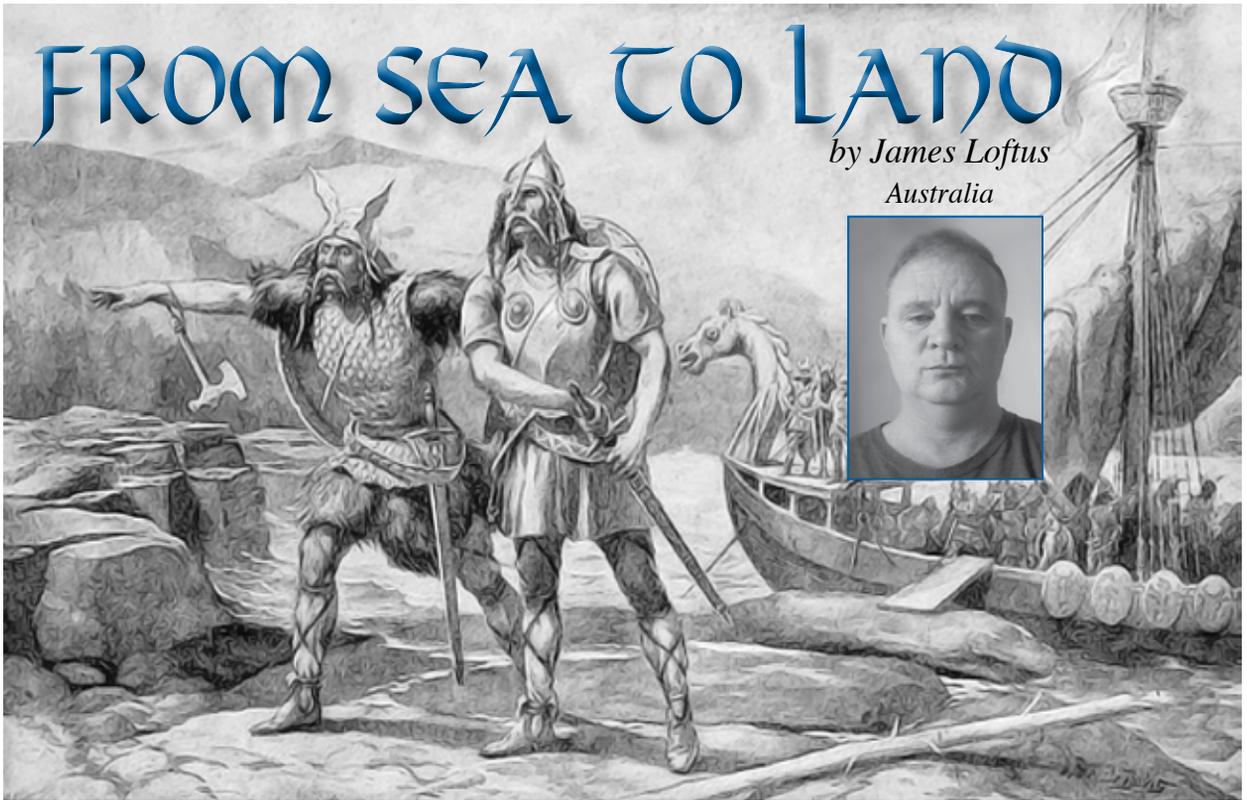
“The Battle of Harlaw, its Lowland Histories and their Balladry: Historical confirmation or confabulation?,” *Review of Scottish Culture*, 24, (2012), 1- 33.

“The Battle of the Four Kingdoms. Harlaw 1411,” *Scots Magazine* (June 2011), 23-27.

FROM SEA TO LAND

by James Loftus

Australia



EDITOR'S NOTE: Author James Loftus joins us for the first time from Australia. Loftus has both Scottish and Irish roots. In this article, he takes a look at the spread of Viking DNA across the British Isles and Ireland. We are glad to have him aboard.

The science of DNA markers has been instructive in disclosing the extent of Viking ancestry in Scotland, as it has in Ireland (very negligible there). In England, one in three Englishmen can claim Viking ancestry and in Wales, two coastal settlements have a significant DNA record.

In Scotland, specifically, the Northern Isles, Caithness, and parts of the Hebrides have high concentrations of Viking DNA markers.

The first recorded Viking attack in Scotland is recorded in 794 on the monastery of Columba on Iona. Many of these early raids were for plunder and left little long-lasting impact. However, over time, the Vikings came to stay and on Orkney and other northern isles, as many Viking women as men made the trip across the

sea. They largely replaced an earlier population who were either slain or made slaves.

In Orkney, researchers believe up to half of all male lineages are Norse in origin, about one third in the Hebrides, and in Caithness, a quarter.

In Ross, the DNA evidence suggests a much less significant genetic impact.

South of Caithness, the Norse DNA drops to no Norse signal at all in the North-East of Ross, and a small echo of Norse genes in the North-West.

It is true that the Vikings were superb sailors and skilled warriors who were very successful in England, conquering large parts of it, in northern France and as far afield as Russia, but it is equally true that south of Caithness their genetic legacy is minimal, as in Ireland where King Brian Boru halted the Viking advance. Something of the like must of occurred in Scotland.

From at least the time of Kenneth MacAlpin thru to the end of Viking raids, although the Scots suffered serious defeats, in the main they managed to hold off and at times severely defeat Viking armies.

King Constantine II of Scotland was instrumental in halting the Viking tide in his country. In Ireland, Flann Sinna married Constantine's aunt, Mael Muire. The consolidation between Celts on both sides of the Irish Sea led to a stiffening of resistance. Scottish warriors aided the Irish and Irish warriors reciprocated.

Also, around the year 900, the Norse of Dublin, frequent Scottish raiders, and the Vikings of Orkney are reported to have been divided between rival leaders and at war with each other.

Constantine ruled for over forty years and is credited with the second-longest reign of any Scottish King. At times he aided Norse one side against another thus using their disunity to his advantage. According to the *Chronicle of Corbridge*, "Constantine had the Vikings flee from him after much bloodshed in Caithness."

To say the survival of Scotland as a Celtic kingdom is down to him is no hyperbole. The Celtic kingdom was under threat – dire, terminal threat. It is in no way an understatement that just

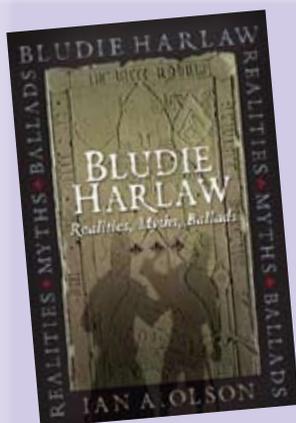
such a conquest by an earlier invasion of Anglo-Saxons, originating mostly from modern-day Germany, changed what was a Celtic/British land into the kingdom of England, and as the name suggests, an Anglo-Saxon nation.

In 937, Constantine invaded England. The resulting battle of Brunanburh is reported in the *Annals of Ulster* as follows:

"A great battle, lamentable and terrible was cruelly fought... in which fell uncounted thousands of Northmen."

The battle was remembered in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* a generation later as the great battle. Constantine was 60-years-old when he led the Scottish host and lost a son amid the turmoil. Constantine also made alliances with notable Norseman by marrying off his daughters, and through his efforts did much to halt the Norse tide. As a result, the Norse DNA, so prevalent in Caithness and the northern Isles and Hebrides, does not present largely in the remainder of Scotland.

A canny Scot's head and able sword stemmed the tide and kept Scotland a Scottish land.

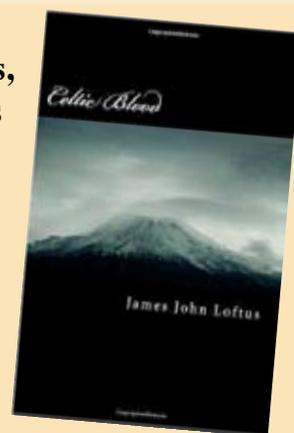


Dr. Ian Olson, of Scotland, has been a doctor, a teacher and an ethnologist. His new book *Bludie Harlaw* is available on Amazon, and at

www.birlinn.co.uk/Bludie-Harlaw.html

In the summer of 1411, the aging Donald of Isla, Lord of the Isles, invaded mainland Scotland with a huge, battle-hardened army, only to be fought to a bloody standstill on the plateau of Harlaw, fifteen miles from Aberdeen, a town he had threatened to sack.

James John Loftus, of Australia, enjoys a co-credit as a feature film writer for the movie *Underdog's Tale*. His debut novel *Celtic Blood* is now available on Amazon.



Set in 13th century Scotland. the son of the murdered Earl of Ross is a fugitive when his family, rival claimants for Scotland's crown, are declared traitors. This book is influenced by MacBeth, and the writing of Nigel Tranter. It is a tale of high drama and suspense.

VACATIONS

by Jim McQuiston
USA

BY LAND, BY SEA

One of the ways in which Celtic history is being kept alive and relevant is in the renewing of old castles and villages, which often then become available for lodging, weddings, golf outings, sightseeing, etc. For our August issue of “By Land, By Sea,” we take a look at two such places – Turin Castle, located in Ireland, and the village of Machrihanish Dunes, located in Scotland.

The staff at these two great locations are big fans of the *Celtic Guide*, and we are big fans of what they do to keep the Celtic dream alive.

TURIN CASTLE

We’ll begin “by land” with Turin Castle, situated in County Mayo, and not too distant from the sea and beautiful Galway Bay. Today, the castle is regarded as the perfect location for intimate weddings and family celebrations and can accommodate up to 25 people in the great hall. The castle can sleep up to 12 people and has been beautifully restored as shown in the accompanying photos.



From their website at www.turincastle.com we learn that the origins of Turin Castle and neighboring castles are sadly mostly lost in the mists of time. According to the chronicler O’Donovan, “In the parish of Kilmaine there are several square Castles said to have been built by the Burkes (de Burgos) There is one in Turin, one in Cregduff, one in Elistron and one in Killernan”.

Turin would appear to derive from the old Irish meaning “small bleaching field,” which may suggest that Turin Castle was involved in the very lucrative trade of sheep farming. By the mid-16th century, Kilmaine, politically and economically, was the most important barony in the county. In 1574, there were 41 castles in an area of just ten miles long by eight wide – by far the highest concentration of castles in Connacht. This is an indication that agriculture was carried out on an industrial scale. The producers were the owners of the estates and would have enjoyed the protection of the upper and lower “Mac William.” In turn the MacWilliams would profit from the duties imposed, which would

probably directly affect the commodity market price in Galway.

Keeping the lines of communication open was essential hence the need for a line of castles protecting the trade route from Lough Corrib to Galway. Apart from this liberal studding of castles in Kilmaine, another possible indication of the profitability and importance of this trade was the presence of a large mercenary army loyal to the MacWilliams.

In the *Division of Connacht 1570-1574* one Walter MacRemon is listed as being a resident of Turin Castle. The MacRemons were a cadet branch of the *Clann Seonin* who were one of the chief de Burgo clans of Ireland.

Following the death of the Mac William, Sir Richard Bourke, in September of 1586, the de Burgo clans and the MacDonnells, along with the O'Malleys and the Joys (Joyces), rose up against the English oppressors in an attempt to reinstate the Mac Williamship, along with other lordships that the English had abolished.

One of the signatories to a document presented to the council of Connacht was Walter Mac Jonyn (Seonin) of Towrin (Turin). This document attested that the principal reason for the rebellion was the abolition of the Mac Williamship and other titles.

In 1589, the de Burgo clans along with the O'Flahertys, Joys and Clandonnel rose up against the English oppressors and plundered the baronies of Clare, Kilmaine and Clanmorris.

Sir Murrough O'Flaherty stayed with a few men at Keltyprichnane in Kilmaine and sent the rest under his son Teige to plunder the baronies of Clare and Dunmore, where they burned 16 towns and gathered 3,000 head of cattle and horses. The "rebel forces" gathered at the Carre in Kilmainham and engaged the English. Edward Bermingham of Milltown Castle, the former Sheriff of Mayo, joined the battle after being attacked by Teige O'Flaherty. He described the battle in a letter written from Athlone on March 31st:-

The soldiers not neglecting their time went against them; there was a volley of

shot on both sides. They came to the push of the pike with great courage, when the said Teige O'Flaherty was slain with eight of his company. They were then disordered and I with six horsemen of mine and eight footmen, being beside our battle as a wing ready to charge upon the breach, did charge.

When I struck their Guidion (standard bearer) under his morion (helmet) with my staff and ran him through in the face of battle. I followed another and had him down, and so did my horseman kill five more at that charge. We had not six score of ground to deal with them when they recovered a main bog. Three of my horsemen and eight footmen did kill of them, in the bog, sixteen.

Her majesty's attorney in that province (Mr Comerford), understanding of their disordering, issued forth when he met of them and did slay 16 divers others in the fight did kill of them, so that I account there is slain of them 80 and upwards. The attorney and I brought the head of Teig O'Flaherty to Sir Richard yester night that was wonderful glad, for this Teig was the stoutest man in the province and could do most.

Following the subjugation and pacification of the Gaelic lords and subsequent plantation of Mayo, many of the castles were abandoned by their new English owners who preferred the comfort of manor houses, in some cases, incorporating the existing building or cannibalizing materials from them.

From records we know that Turin Castle had been abandoned for at least 250 years, up until its restoration in 1997.

Learn more about Turin Castle at
www.turincastle.com
or on their FB page at
<https://www.facebook.com/Turincastle>

MACHRIHANISH DUNES

Next we move “by sea” or at least very near to the sea, to Machrihanish Dunes, a quintessential Scottish seaside resort village.

Luxurious stone cottages, the world’s most natural golf course, two lovingly restored historic hotels, a rejuvenating full-service spa, and five restaurants and pubs make Machrihanish Dunes arguably Scotland’s most exciting new holiday destination. In fact, *Golf Tourism Scotland* named The Village at Machrihanish Dunes the “Resort of the Year” for 2013, and the readers of *Bunkered Magazine* named it “Scotland’s Best Experience“.

Located on Kintyre, the area is a wonderland of medieval sites, castles dating back centuries, 18th century abbeys, and even Victorian-era architecture. One can relish in the rich history of Campbeltown – including its days as a bustling resort town and the rise of its distilleries.

Campbeltown was once the site of a MacDonnell/MacDonald stronghold, and after being adopted by the Campbells, many MacDonald septs continued to live in the area. My own family of McQuiston is found very early in Campbeltown.

For those wishing to get away from it all in Celtic style, The Village at Machrihanish Dunes may just be the place. Nestled in the southwest corner of the Mull of Kintyre, where the movements of sea, sand, wind and grazing sheep have intertwined over countless centuries, an inspirational golf and holiday destination has been born. Here, in this raw and beautifully rugged landscape, you’ll find a magical place where you can reconnect with nature while reveling in accommodations that surround you with luxury.

The Village at Machrihanish Dunes consists of the Machrihanish Dunes Golf Club (Top 100 Course in U.K. & Ireland by *GolfWorld*), The Ugadale Hotel (2012 Scottish Hotel Awards Hotel of the Year), The Ugadale Golf Cottages (Golf Tourism Scotland’s Small Hotel of the Year), The Royal Hotel, The Kintyre Club,

Serenity Spa, The Old Clubhouse Pub and more. For a weekend golf getaway with friends or a week of relaxation with family, it would be hard to find a more ideal destination.

The area has been immortalized in popular culture by the 1977 hit song “Mull of Kintyre” by Kintyre resident Paul McCartney. This song became the biggest hit ever, in the UK, for McCartney’s band of the day, Wings.

Below are a few shots of the area around The Village at Machrihanish Dunes.



Learn more about Machrihanish Dunes at
<http://machrihanishdunes.com>
or on their FB page at
<https://www.facebook.com/MachDunes>

Irish Blue

By Kelli Lowry
USA @2004

EDITOR'S NOTE: The selkie, it seems, is the quintessential physical embodiment of “By Land, By Sea” in Celtic lore. We stray a bit from our typical historical non-fiction to bring our readers a bit of fancy provided by returning author Kelli Lowry, entitled “Irish Blue”.

He rose from the depths of the sea, water sliding down his body like the cold caress of a jealous, angry lover. He was leaving his first love to heed the call of the mortal woman who summoned him with seven tears shed in the water where he lived.

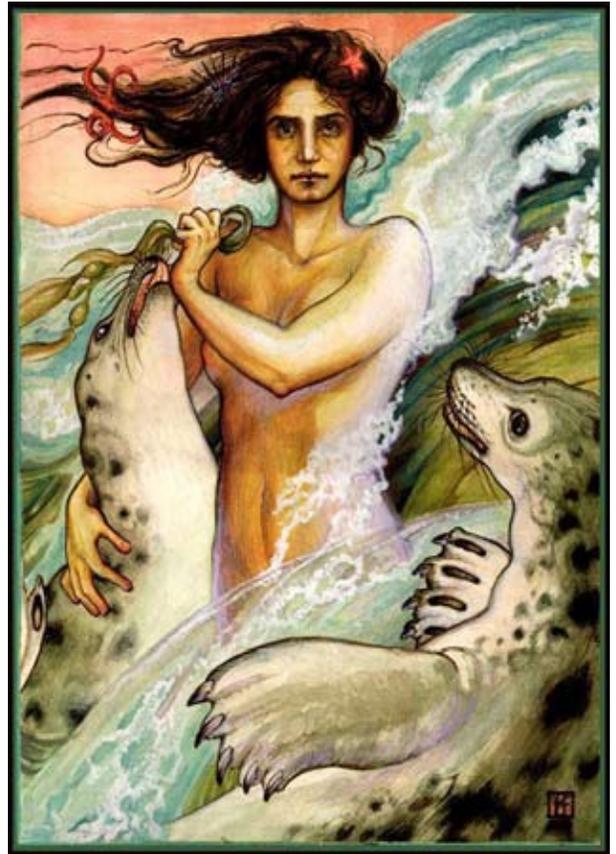
Lying on his stomach at the water's edge, he breathed jerkily at first, then in a more stable manner. He felt the roughness of the sand beneath his skin and as if with one last futile attempt to bring him back to her, the sea slammed a wave over him when he pushed up onto all fours.

Vaguely remembering the sand would dry and fall from his body, he stood and watched the silver reflection of the moon upon the now calm water. The sand did not give beneath his feet as he walked a path which would be unknown to anyone else.

Stopping, he looked up at the solid earth rising before him. It was a strange sensation, foreign after all this time since he'd not been summoned in hundreds of years.

Beginning the ascent, he felt the earth warm to him, then make him welcome to her. Losing his balance momentarily, he slipped. Even though his head hit a large protruding rock, he continued on his way.

He recalled his name in this form. It was Duncan Sloane.



Cursing her luck for having a problem with the rental car, Mollie MacFie slammed the hood angrily. She'd been perfectly happy a few hours earlier while walking on the beach, until her now ex-fiancé called her to let her know he thought it best to break it off with her while she was out of the country.

She'd stood at the water's edge, facing the sea and cried, but only for a few moments. When she realized it was more from relief than anything else, she brushed the tears aside and kept going with her seaside walk, determined to enjoy her newly found freedom. She had been having second thoughts and that was part of the reason she chose to come here.

Once upon a time, she read something in a book about how someone would know that a particular person was the right one to be with. She kept second-guessing herself and finally grasped the idea. Just to make certain, she traveled to the Outer Hebrides to research her ancestry and make a concerted effort to reach a final decision on getting married.

It seemed as though since the decision had been made for her, she could concentrate fully on the purpose of her visit. Hearing footsteps behind her, Mollie turned. She let out a surprised squeak as she blinked, trying to process what she was seeing. Staring at the naked man standing before her, she backed up several steps and was met with the solidity of the car.

“You summoned me.” His voice was harsh from not having spoken this language for so long.

Reaching behind her, Mollie fumbled for the car door and slid over a few steps. “I—I—” She could hear the accusing tone in his voice. “Uh, no?”

He allowed his gaze to bore into her, trying to understand her denial. She had summoned him, which meant she wanted him to take her as his own. “Yes.”

Wondering where he came from, she tried to keep from staring, but that was quite impossible. The man had a body to die for, elbow length dark hair and blue eyes that almost glowed, they were such an odd color. “I don’t know who you are or where you came from, but I most certainly did not summon you.”

“I am Duncan Sloane.”

“M-mollie MacFie.” Walking quickly around the car, she effectively put it between them. There really wasn’t anywhere to run, but if she could get into the car and lock herself in, perhaps he would go away. His accent was unlike any she’d ever heard.

“MacFie? You mean *MacDubhSidhe*.”

Eyes wide, she shook her head. “No. MacFie.”

“How are you a son of the dark fae? That is what your name means. Your name should be *Nic Dubh Sidhe*, daughter of the dark fae.”

“No. It’s not. I mean, I don’t know. I was here to find out.” Mollie swore to herself and wondered if she was hallucinating. When he ran his fingers through his hair to get it off his forehead, she saw blood smeared on his forehead. “You’re injured.”

“It will heal. Come walk with me, Mollie.”

“No, thank you.” This was bizarre. She felt

so drawn to him and it wasn’t anything which she could explain, either. She just wanted to be with him. Speaking in a firmer tone, she politely declined again.

“You summoned me. Now you have to come with me.”

“I don’t think so.”

He smiled. “Do you not know what you’ve done?”

Reaching for the door handle of the car, she moved slowly. “No.”

“Because you’re a mortal woman, the power of your tears summoned me; you gave them to the sea, Mollie. It means you’re willing to come with me and be mine, thus I am here to take you with me.”

“Yours?”

“You did not know of this? Those of your line are descended from a selkie. She came to shore and cast off her selkie skin, marrying the MacFie who summoned her. He knew what she was and took her skin so she could not return to the sea. Afterwards, she swore any woman who was of his line could summon the Selkie King but in doing so, would have to return to the sea with him.”

Mollie gave a shaky laugh. “Just like that, I’m to believe I’m supposed to go off with you?”

“Believe what you wish. A fact is a fact.”

“Faerie tales and legends are not facts.” Finally able to tear her gaze away from his eerie blue eyes, she opened the car door and was startled when she felt a hand on her arm. How he moved that quickly to where she was standing, she had no idea.

Duncan Sloane grinned wickedly. “One person’s fact is another’s legend.” Pulling her to him, he slid his arms around her waist. “One kiss, my beautiful Mollie. If you can still tell me no, I will leave you, although there will be consequences.”

She could feel the heat of his hands through the material of her tee shirt. Her chest brushed against him as she took a deep breath. When she looked into his eyes, there was no denying something deep within her responded to him.

Leaning over, he kissed her the only way he

could to prove she belonged with him. Possessive need and loneliness flowed from his mouth to hers. He let her glimpse her future with two children and him returning seven years after their birth to take them with him. “Mollie, be my love. Return with me to the sea and be my queen.”

With a gasp, she stared up at him, stunned at what she felt and the image of the two children burned into her mind. “What if I do?”

“We will be together forever.”

Swallowing hard, she nodded. “If I choose not to?”

“You’ll bear my two offspring and raise them alone. Seven years to the day of their birth, I’ll return for them, but you’ll not be able to come with us, so it must be now or never.”

The impact of his words settled into her mind. He was saying they would...no, Mollie didn’t want to believe it. She wasn’t the kind of woman who slept with a perfect stranger. Not even if he was perfect—and perfectly naked. “Duncan Sloane, I don’t believe I’ll take you up on your offer. I think this is a positively horrid joke someone is trying to play on me for whatever reason, and I’m not going along with this any further.”

Grasping her upper arms in anger, he shook her once. “Do you not understand you’ll never be able to be with another man? You’re mine. You belong to me.”

“N-no!” She pulled back from him. “Go away.”

“So be it.” He released her and turned away.

As he walked further from her, a feeling of deep longing and need tore through her. She forced herself to look over the top of the car at the sea to try and collect her thoughts. When she turned her gaze to where he’d been walking, he was gone. “Duncan?”

Running in the same direction where she’d seen him go, Mollie tried to fight the panic she felt overwhelming her at the thought of him being gone. “Duncan?”

He stopped, feeling the magic fading, and hoped it would last long enough for him to succeed.

“Please wait.” When she saw him again, she

wondered if he would tell her it was too late. She knew he was the one for her.

Taking her in his arms, he leaned down and kissed her again. When he ended the kiss, they were at the water’s edge.

“How did we get down here?” Aware that she was now naked, she dug her toes into the sand, staring up into his eyes. They were the color of the sea by which they stood. That color was Irish blue.

“The only thing which matters is we are together now.”

Nodding, she felt his warm flesh against hers, thinking this was how it was meant to be. The sand began to recede as the water began to flow deeper to welcome them to the sea.

It was like going home, only better, because they were together forever.

+++++

“Jamie, have a look.”

The old man stood by the abandoned car and looked in the direction of where his friend was pointing his gnarled hand.

Another nude female body lay where the tide receded. With a sigh, he shook his head, thinking of what would need to be done now with notifying the authorities, who would notify the family, and how the inconclusive investigations would happen yet again.

“Damn selkie legend...”

Kelli Lowry has been writing about Celtic legends for some time now. She is very near to having her own website at

<http://scripturesofmidnight.net>

Check back every now and then to see how she is progressing, and watch for more from her in the *Celtic Guide*.

SIR HENRY MORGAN

by Greg Schipp
USA

And the Raid on Panama City

There are numerous pirates from history whose exploits are so well known that they become legend. Names like William Kidd, Edward “Blackbeard” Teach, Grace O’Malley, Anne Bonny, Mary Read, John “Calico Jack” Rackham, Sir Francis Drake, and many others are well known in Western maritime history. Like most criminals today, very few lived long lives. None of them retired and lived a life of comfort and luxury from all the wealth they obtained over the years of pirating. One particular figure who stood out from all the others was Sir Henry Morgan. Though technically not considered a pirate, there were a few instances that almost made Morgan a pirate. Morgan’s raid on Panama City in 1671 almost made him a pirate, as his commission did not have any of the authoritative backing from London. The only thing that kept Morgan from meeting gallows like the rest of his pirate brethren was his connections with London’s upper class.

Sir Henry Morgan was born in 1635, in the Monmouth county of Wales. Historians are not sure where exactly in Wales he was born. Some genealogists argue he was born in Penkarne while others argue that he was born in Llanrhymney.¹ Little is known about Henry’s parents, except that his family had a prominent military background. Two of his uncles were distinguished soldiers, Major General Sir Thomas Morgan, and Colonel Edward Morgan. Henry left school at an early age to become a soldier and joined the English military. In 1654, Morgan was part of an expeditionary force led by General Venables and Admiral Peen to capture Hispaniola. The English began their invasion on Hispaniola by attacking Santa



Public Domain - Sir Henry Morgan

Domingo, but failed due to poor leadership, fierce Spanish resistance, and tropical diseases. After failing to capture Hispaniola, the English turned their attention to Jamaica, which was guarded by fewer Spanish soldiers. The attack succeeded and Jamaica became a British settlement.²

Morgan went on to become a successful privateer, leading raids on Villahermosa, and Gran Granada. By age thirty-two, Morgan became Admiral of the Brethren of the Coast, a loose organization of pirates and privateers who would later be known as buccaneers.³ The so-called buccaneers have a colorful history that is nothing short of intriguing. The

¹ Stephan Talty, *Empire of Blue Water*. (New York, NY: Random House, Inc. 2007). 9

² David Cordingly, *Under The Black Flag*. (New York, NY: Random House, Inc. 1995). 44

³ *Ibid.* 44

term buccaneer comes from the word boucan, meaning barbecue, which was a grill that the Arawak Indians used to roast their meat. It could also refer to the place that the natives dried and salted their meat. The buccaneers were mostly French hunters who hunted the wild cattle and pigs of Hispaniola. Eventually, they became a multinational group, made up of runaway indentured servants and slaves, marooned sailors, deserters, outlaws, displaced plantation owners, and political refugees.⁴ During his raid on Portobello in 1668, Morgan's crew consisted of forty Dutchmen, several French, Italian, Portuguese, and African, and a few British.⁵

Buccaneers were traders in salted meat and skins, selling their goods to passing ships. That all changed when the Spanish made the mistake of trying to rid the buccaneers from the island of Hispaniola in the 1630s. By then the buccaneers turned to piracy, targeting Spanish vessels that passed through their territory. The buccaneers used canoes and one-masted sloops to take the Spanish ships by surprise. If surprise wasn't an option, they used their hunting skills to pick off the crew on deck and row behind the vessel, then jam the rudder before boarding. Their actions played a small, significant role in the decline of Spanish power in the New World.⁶

Morgan had carried out daring raids during his career as a privateer. The greatest raid that he carried out, which could have ended his career and his life, was on Panama City in 1671. According to Tim Travers, England and Spain had made peace after signing the Treaty of Madrid in 1670.⁷ Shortly after the Treaty of Madrid was signed, the Governor of Cartagena was given authorization from the Queen of Spain to resume hostilities towards the English in the West Indies. The Governor of Cartagena

had commissioned a Portuguese privateer by the name of Captain Rivero carry out that task. Rivero first raided the Cayman Islands and attacked a Jamaican privateer ship. In June, Rivero raided Montego Bay and destroyed most of the homes in the settlement. A month later he raided a settlement on the southern coast of Jamaica and burned two homes. The Dutch Governor of Curaçao had reported that Spain had officially declared war on Jamaica. On August 1, 1670, Sir Thomas Modyford, the Governor of Jamaica, had commissioned Henry Morgan to wage war on the Spanish with the authority to attack enemy vessels and assault enemy territory.⁸

Morgan had sailed to the Isla Vaca where he had a council of war with his buccaneers. Panama City was decided as the target, as it was considered a valuable target.⁹ Panama City was the principal treasure port where gold and silver that were brought from Peru and Potosí.¹⁰

In December of that year, Morgan led the largest pirate fleet in the Caribbean with 37 ships and 2,000 buccaneers. They first sailed to Port Lorenzo at the mouth of the river Chagres. There, Morgan and his buccaneers assaulted a Spanish fort, but it took them two days before the fort surrendered. Once they had taken the Spanish fort, they continued their way to Panama through the thick jungle, leaving a party behind to safeguard their ships. The passage through the jungle was miserable, as heat, mosquitoes, Spanish snipers, and lack of food had made the journey difficult. The Spanish used a scorched earth policy to defeat Morgan, but fortunately the buccaneers had found cattle to eat once they made their way through the jungle. Morgan and his crew had made their way to the outskirts of Panama City.¹¹

⁴ Tim Travers, *Pirates: A History*. (Gloucestershire, UK: Tempus Publishing. 2007). 97

⁵ Cordingly, 15

⁶ Travers. 98-99

⁷ Ibid. 140

⁸ Cordingly, 50

⁹ Travers. 140

¹⁰ Cordingly. 51

¹¹ Travers. 141

The Governor of Panama, Don Juan Pérez de Guzman, had stationed 1200 footman and 400 horsemen defending the entrance to Panama.¹² The problem with Don Juan's defense was that most of the defenders were inexperienced recruits, mostly slaves, Africans, Indians, and a few Spanish soldiers. De Guzman's forces had poor muskets, but made up for it with three leather covered light field pieces. In the rear, the defenders had two herds of wild cattle to disrupt the buccaneers when released. Morgan had set up his men in a military fashion by setting up four battalions with an advance guard, a central main body, two wings, and a reserve battalion in the rear.¹³ Morgan believed that a frontal assault would be costly, so he had one of his squadrons wheel aside and capture the hill to the right of the city.

The Spanish saw this and thought that the buccaneers were retreating and charged. The buccaneers fired a deadly volley into the disorganized attackers, killing the Spanish horsemen as they came charging towards the pirates. The surviving horsemen fled back to the city, leaving the Spanish footmen behind to fend for themselves. About a hundred Spanish defenders were slain while the rest retreated. The cattle were released by the Spanish, but were either shot or scared away by the buccaneers.¹⁴

As Morgan and his crew descended upon it, the Spanish had set fire to the city, as 200 powder kegs in various locations were ignited to prevent the buccaneers from robbing the city of its valuables. The buccaneers tried to find whatever wealth they could.

Morgan and his men tried to stop the fire by destroying houses in the path of the fire. Only 300 houses remained after the fire.¹⁵

Much to the disappointment of the buccaneers, most of the wealth in the city was loaded onto the ship the *Santissima Trinidad* bound for Lima. Morgan spent the month stealing wealth from the inhabitants and combing the countryside for refugees for their valuables. Morgan also had civilians cruelly tortured to find any hidden treasures.¹⁶

By the end of February, Morgan had loaded 175 mules with silver plate and coin, along with 600 prisoners; the total value of buccaneer's plunder was reported to be £30,000. When the booty was divided, each buccaneer received 200 pieces of eight, while Morgan was left with £1,000. The buccaneers were angered at this, as they felt that Morgan had cheated them out of their share.¹⁷ Morgan quickly left his men behind with his share, while the buccaneers dispersed in different directions. The French returned to Tortuga and Hispaniola, while the others sailed to the coast of Honduras and the Bay of Campeche to join the settlements of logwood cutters.¹⁸

Morgan was given a hero's welcome in Jamaica upon his return. Morgan was publicly thanked for his service to Jamaica. Sir Modyford's brother wrote, "I think we are pretty well revenged for their burning our houses on ye north and south side of this island."¹⁹ London authorities were less than thrilled. The Spanish authorities were outraged at the destruction of Panama and demanded action. The Queen of Spain was reported to be in "such a distemper and excess of weeping and violent passion as those about her feared it might shorten her life."²⁰

While the Spanish had raided English settlements in Jamaica, England was still at

¹² Cordingly, 51

¹³ Travers. 140

¹⁴ Cordingly, 51

¹⁵ Travers. 142-143

¹⁶ Ibid. 143

¹⁷ Ibid 144

¹⁸ Cordingly. 53

¹⁹ Ibid. 53

²⁰ Ibid 54

peace with Spain. Sir Modyford did not have any authority to give Morgan commission to attack the Spanish. England wanted to distance itself from the whole affair by blaming it upon the buccaneers. London decided that Sir Modyford was to be replaced as governor by Sir Thomas Lynch. Sir Modyford was arrested and sent to the Tower of London to appease the Spanish. After two years, Modyford was released and sent back to Jamaica as Chief Justice. Morgan was arrested and sent to London aboard the frigate *HMS Welcome*. Unlike Modyford, Morgan was never imprisoned. He was able to walk about London as a free man, visiting friends and relations. Morgan was asked by Lord Arlington to advise King Charles II on how to improve defenses in Jamaica, as Sir Lynch was worried about the rise in recent pirate attacks. Morgan became Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica and was later given a knighthood. In the final years of his life, Morgan managed his estate and sugar plantations, and attended meetings. He was considered an ineffective advisor, as Lord Vaughan, the newly replaced Governor,

complained that Morgan spent most of his time drinking and gambling, and was unfit for government duties. The only time that he had proved to be an effective leader was when he defended Jamaica against a French fleet led by Comte d'Estrées. In 1687, Morgan's health had deteriorated substantially after years of alcohol abuse.²¹ When Morgan died on August 25, 1688, the Duke of Albemarle ordered a state funeral for the Welsh buccaneer. His coffin was carried on a gun carriage through Port Royal to St. Peter's church, the largest building in the town. When his coffin was laid to rest, warships and merchant ships in the harbor fired off a twenty gun salute.²² A remarkable send-off for a pirate legend.

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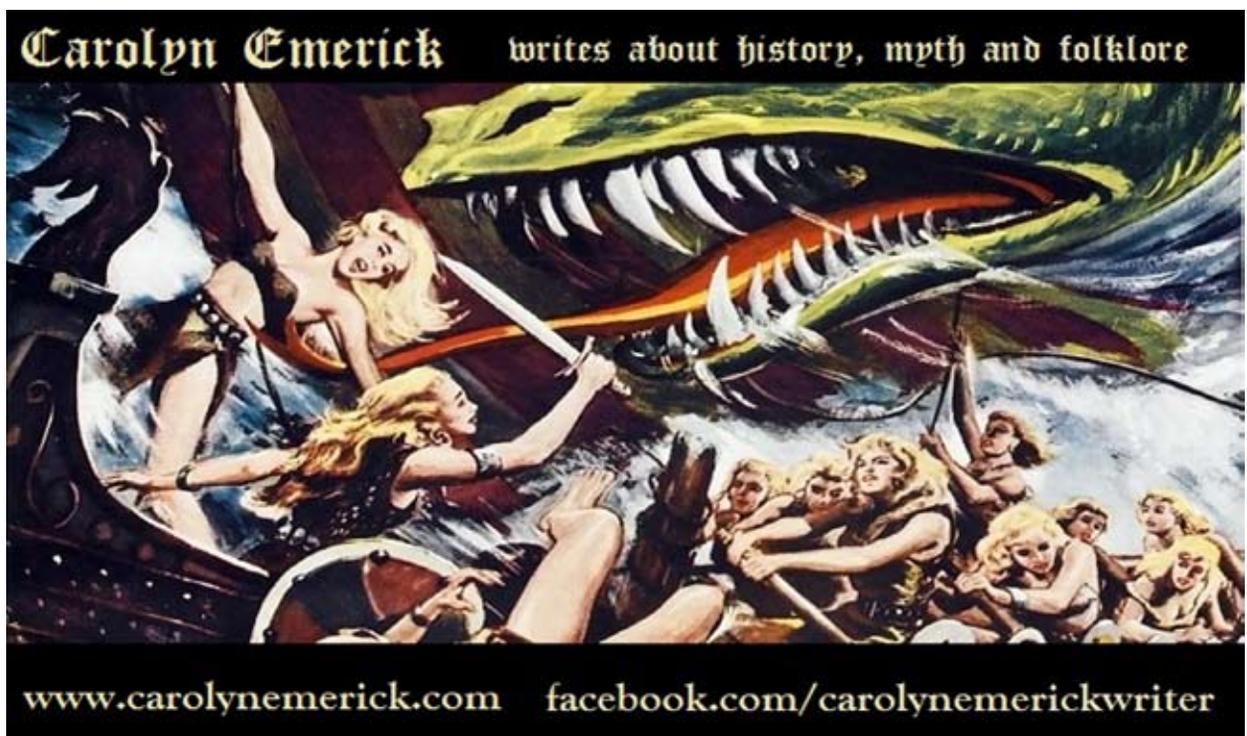
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²¹ Cordling, 55

²² Ibid 43



Henceforth Tales

by Cass and Deborah Wright
Bellows Falls, VT, USA

Sinclair

The Sea . . . so vast in its scope that it fills our entire event-horizon, whenever we stand upon a shore and behold it. . . a force so omnipotently powerful that even today, with all our great technological advancement, we still must acknowledge that upon leaving sight of that shoreline, we face great and continual peril, for we have dared to put ourselves upon an alien surface of immeasurable power.

With those sobering facts in mind, can we really appreciate what such oceanic voyaging was like in ages past, before satellite tracking, radio-telemetry, sonar interface, inflatable life-support vessels, and auto-powered bailing pumps? Back there, in the olden times, year in, year out, you could ultimately rely only upon the lash-timbered stoutness of your sailing ship, the seasoned sureness of your crew, your instincts about weather, your elder craft about the stars and constellations, and a whole lot of luck from the Gods o' the Deep, to get yourself home safely to harbor - most of the time.

Small wonder the oceans of the world became so rife with the lore of great mysteries, and why we view the earliest crossers of oceans with such awe, and wonder - the Phoenicians, who leapfrogged from Africa to the Canaries to the Caribbean; the Maoris; who island-hopped all over the Pacific, from Chile to New Zealand; and the Basque whalers, who pursued their quarry the length and breadth of the mighty Orinoco Flow . . .

Still, few ever dared the most

treacherous span of salt water then known - the turbulent, sorcerous North Atlantic! Norway's Eric the Red; the Irish monk, St. Brendan, the exiled Prince Madoc of Wales . . . brave men, and hearty, and very few in number . . . but could there also have been a bold mariner from Scotland amongst that elite? If so, might he have had a secret mission, perhaps entrusted, in his crossing, with the stewardship of the most sacred artifact that the world of men had ever sought?

But every good tale should start at its best beginning, and so this one needs furlled open first on the misty shores of Normandy in France, in the spring of 1066.

An ambitious young nobleman called William, a son of the powerful Comte de Sainte Claire, has thrown his not-inconsiderable lot in with the schemes of an elder cousin, also named William, a man born illegitimately to the loftiest of royal bloodlines, a warlord of grand ambition, the bellicose princeling known throughout Normandy and Brittany, for lack of a true patronymic, as The Bastard.

History records that along his road to Destiny,



Sinclair Tartan and Shield

nothing withstood his advance, and after crushing the great conjoined armies of Saxon Britain at Hastings Field, he rode in triumph as William the Conqueror to Westminster, no one's bastard ever again, and rose from his coronation there as the new and irrevocable King of All England and, presumably, Lord Regent of Wales, Cornwall, and the Debatable Lands, betwixt the Roman Walls.

In the thick of all the pomp and glory and conquest of a nation, William de Ste. Claire hung as close as the surging throngs would allow to his now-royal cousin, biding his time as those first roots of the Ruling House of Plantagenets were sown in the blood-fed soil, lingering in vigilant readiness, until it finally became obvious that though the towns and counties and shires of England were being divided like a great, rich pie for the Conqueror's cherished earls and captains, no wedge was to be awarded for his own loyal service. Marshalling his retinue, Ste. Claire grudgingly followed the examples of other great Norman chiefs of lesser favor, from such great Houses as Gordon, Fraser, of Leslie, Melville, and deBrus, later Bruce, and turned his sights north across the Midlands, up beyond Northumbria, beyond York, and the Coldstreams. . . to the far hinterlands of the strange and treacherous Scots.

Seemingly, William's fate changed nearly as soon as his entourage had forded the River Tweed, as even then the villages and hamlets were buzzing with the news of their beloved King in Dumfermline, known popularly as Malcolm Canmore, whose Queen was dividing her time between giving Malcolm sons to inherit his throne, and teaching his entire court to behave as the feudal nobility of her native Hungary. Clearly, Canmore needed knights and barons and retainers who could serve as further examples of the New Way for his royal court. Being a blooded Norman knight himself, and one in sudden need of replenishable lands and holdings, William de Sainte Claire fit the bill nicely in answer to the new dynasty and

feudal system of Malcolm Canmore and his impressionable young sons. It might well have seemed to Sir William, that the colorful Scottish King could become the very resource for him and his family that his conquering cousin was never willing to be, and toward that end he set about to make himself indispensable to his new liege-lord, this Malcolm of the Great Head.

So successful was he in such endeavors, that awards of land and holdings did indeed follow, most principally the town of Roslyn, the celebrated community which would become the location of one of Scotland's most revered churches. More Williams followed their progenitor, obviously a favored name of descent, and most of them took vows of knighthood, until in the twelfth century, we find two families with the surname "St. Clair", a few vowels having been dropped, one having become the Great House of Roslyn, and another well-known family in Herdmonstoun, though surviving records are indistinct about the exact connections that united them. Sir William de St. Clair of Roslyn, who flourished in the latter half of the thirteenth century, was a guardian of the young Scottish king, Alexander III, and one of the envoys sent to negotiate the French marriage for that prince. He was listed as the sheriff of Dumfries, and was even appointed to the office of justiciar of Galloway. However, as a partisan of the martinet Baliol, this William wound up captured by English forces at Dunbar in 1294, escaping from Gloucester Castle after nine arduous years of incarceration there. His son, Henry, fared better – though captured as well at Dunbar, he was exchanged in the summer of 1299. Sir Henry went on to become the sheriff of Lanark in 1305, and even fought for Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Bannockburn.

But at this key point, we need to pause and look back up the calendar, back to the year of 1307 – for in the autumn of that year, Lord Sir Jacques DeMolay, the Grand Master of the Christian Order of the Poor Knights Templar, was arrested by Philip IV, the draconian king

of France, allegedly for committing conspiracy of insurrection against the thrones of Europe. In reality, this was a strategy to abrogate his accumulated debt to the Templars, which was massive enough to beggar his nation's treasury and war chest combined. Philip also brought his full leverage to bear on the newly-elected Pope Pius V, who acceded to his demands to charge DeMolay with heresy, and the entire Templar Order with unchristian acts and blasphemy of behavior and ritual, lettered out in papal bulls of condemnation, and warrants of seizure, arrest, and confiscation, and distributed to enforcers of law throughout every nation and city-state in Christendom. It became largely all for naught, though, as the knights of the Templar Order seemed to vanish on the winds, taking with them, somehow, the lion's share of their vast reported wealth, their standing regiments of

mounted warriors, and their armadas of laden ships, leaving only handfuls of deMolay's most senior officers to be dragged in chains before Philip's courts in France to face fabricated charges. After six years of imprisonment, interrogation, and torture, Jacques deMolay was burned at the stake on an island in the Seine, by royal decree, in the spring of 1314, just ten weeks before Edward II would amass his army at a place called Bannockburn, and demand of Scotland's most powerful nobility either their tribute or their surrender.

So now we rejoin our Sir Henry de St. Clair there, commanding his own forces under orders to the Bruce. Could some of his followers at stirrup in those lines have been fugitive Templars themselves? Henry's family was rumored to have maintained sanguine relations with their distant cousins in northern and central France –



From "A new description of the Shyres Lothian and Linlitquo Be T. Pont. Judocus Hondius celavit sumptibus Andrae Hart." Timothy Pont 1630. Source: National Library of Scotland

could these have included bloodlines connected to Cathar and Merovingian houses, known to have collaborated with, and been sympathetic to, the Templar Order for many decades? Could the presence of such highly-skilled battlefield legends have contributed to the Scottish victory that long June day, if they were indeed there among the ranks 'neath the Saltire Cross? Could portions of the wealth attributed to them have augmented the coffers of their new hosts, if perchance a troop or two of these Crusading Knights had arrived in secrecy to the moors and braes of Rosslyn? Knights Templar were also widely known to be promoters and practitioners of the fraternal Order of Masons, which in Medieval times, encompassed both speculative and operative masons, men who guarded some of the most critical secrets of architectural guild work. Might that have influenced the impressively refined designs of architecture so widely renowned in the early completions of the Rosslyn Chapel, that cherished sanctuary of Christian adoration, so proudly funded and sponsored and protected by the St. Clairs? When did they go from being the St. Clairs, to the Sinclairs? That last is yet another question with no single answer, and first we must give Henry's son his due.

For that we move forward from Bannockburn, to the valiant quest that strove to patriate the Bruce's heart to Jerusalem, for princely absolution, on the day that pilgrimage came to an early end, with their opposition in Granada by a force of Andalusian Moors. In the course of that struggle, one Scottish knight had charged too far, and gotten trapped beyond the skirmish line, and so seeing young Sir William St. Clair in dire peril, the Good Sir James, the Black Douglas, tore free from about his neck the cask containing his deceased king's heart, hurling it high into the Moorish fray. "Pass first in fight, as thee are wont to do," he bellowed out, "Douglas shalt follow thee or die!", and so saying, did exactly that, along with most of his men, including both William St. Clair and his

younger brother, John. Thankfully, Sir Simon Lee of Locard survived to retrieve the Bruce's heart, and return it to Melrose Abbey, and thankfully also, Sir William left behind male issue to continue his line.

Later generations of chiefs sought to extend their diplomacy by intermarrying with the neighboring Scandanavian gentry and nobility, bringing within their family tradition many customs from the Norse-related peoples of the Shetland and Orkney Isles, including a preference for wearing trousers and capes, and influences of language, which might yield clues to the evolution of the spelling and dialectic shift from St. Clair to Sinclair (often pronounced as "sing'klarr"), so firmly in evidence by the Stuart reigns, even though St. Clair was still the favored personal surname for the men of noble descent up through the late Georgian times. Due to the finesse of one such marriage, the Earldoms of Straihearn, Caithness and Orkney came into the possession of the Sinclairs, resulting in a son named Henry, who would be named the Prince of Orkney on his maturity by Haakon VI of Norway. Emboldened by his conquest of the Faroe Islands in 1391, for Scotland, not Norway, Henry I. Sinclair (a middle initial? how strange!), embarked on a most peculiar sea voyage, in a fully manned and provisioned multi-masted sailing ship of his own design, purportedly to explore the place known as "Green Land" which his mother's relations had spoken of so often. And so he departed, to return the following year and proclaimed that he had indeed explored Greenland, which he declared as having no great promise . . . but did he go farther, as legend would have us believe?

Did he perhaps explore much of the outer shoreline of the Canadian Maritimes, finally choosing a small, obscure locale known now as Oak Island, as a place where a certain something could be hidden? Perhaps a single, fantastic object, well over a millennium old, of immense religious significance, and inestimable worth, perhaps brought in secret by Templar hands

from a guarded vault in Jerusalem? Does it still wait at the bottom of a deep and deadly well, from whence all might dream, but never drink? Come, gaze at all the New World plants and animals sculpted into the younger pillars within the chapel at Rosslyn, back home in the lands of the Sinclairs, and wonder along with the rest of us, where exactly Henry's exploring boots took him, and what his Masonic hands might have left behind.

Ah, but back home in Scotland, the following centuries were not always kind to Clan Sinclair; though the Earls of the early-to-mid 1400s did live in nearly regal splendor at their lordly keeps, the greatest being, of course, Rosslyn Castle. Their fortunes often rose and sank in sudden waves, many times in accordance with their devotions to the various King Jameses, and they rose and ruled and eventually met their Maker. Further, long-standing feuds of fire, blood and steel between the Earls of Sinclair and the Earls of Sutherland served neither side well, as years passed; eventually quelled by several royal intercessions, it gave way to many generations' worth of accumulated debt and mortgage. Poised to take advantage of these fiscal pressures, John Campbell, the Earl of Glenorchy, who managed to purchase and acquire control of the Sinclair Chief's liens of debt, and have them sanctioned by legal process, dispatched a force of deputies and bailiffs to serve notice and legally seize the principal lands of Caithness in 1672.

George Sinclair, the chief of his clan and sixth Earl of Orkney, responded to this advance against his holdings by dispatching his standing home army against the Campbell party, known to be numbering less than thirty souls, and hard put to resist the armed opposition of over a hundred trained soldiers, half of whom would be mounted as cavalry. Unbeknownst to the Earl, however, Glenorchy had included with his tacksmen a secret weapon: two dozen marksmen from Clan MacIntyre, each armed with musket and longbow. The engagement was brief, and for the Sinclairs, disastrous - the clothyard shafts and

musket balls of the MacIntyre artillery scythed the charging Sinclairs with calm and gruesome accuracy, to an extent that future archivists would claim the Sinclairs had fallen so thickly, the Campbell enforcers afterward crossed the river Altmarlech without wetting their feet. Although the Clan would challenge that seizure of land nine years later before Parliament, and win back its legal possession, the memory of what was often called "the Caithness massacre" would burn in their memories for generations to come.

Nevertheless, over the centuries following, the Sinclairs addressed the majority of all their continuing debt successfully, without further threat to their lands and holdings. In 1736, when Scottish Freemasons convened to charter a Grand Lodge for their country, William St. Clair lobbied brilliantly for the seat of first Grand Master and was duly elected by his peers. Masonic secrets, the esoteric riddles of an arcane chapel, rumors of fugitive Templars, the prehistoric ebb and flow of underground aquifers flooding a hidden shaft on a remote Canadian Island, perhaps all to protect an ancient legacy as mysterious as anything lurking deep in Loch Ness? Not unlike, perhaps, a Brontosaurus from the oil fields of the American West . . .

Ask the Sinclairs!

This material is just a sampling of one of the 60 Clan names and legends appearing in the Spring 2014 upcoming book; -

Henceforth Tales

by Cass and Deborah Wright

Follow future issues of Celtic Guide for further information about 2014 publication. . . . and thank you for joining us at the hearth ! - DW

So, what's next?

First we need to make a slight correction. In last month's issue we referred to Castle Dunrobin as being on the Orkney Islands. It is, in fact, on the way to the crossing to the Orkneys in a town called Golspie located in East Sutherland . . . a village of 1650 people, located so picturesquely on the shores of the Moray Firth.

As for our upcoming themes, September will be themed "The Harvest," and "Halloween" will return as our ever-popular theme for October. Since the Samhain celebration ends on November 1st, we will next look at Celtic festivals, ceremonies and celebrations from throughout the years. The actual November theme will be "Celebration." We expect to have tales of Samhain in the October issue, which is fine, but there are many other celebrations to write about, currently being held, held in past mythology or history, or held regularly as part of Celtic tradition.

We never seem to have a dearth of articles to match a theme, which is a good thing. We expect this to continue and we hope to continue to build this online resources for all things Celtic.

If you have an idea for a theme, or a tale that should be told, feel free to drop us a line at celticguide@gmail.com. We have always been very open to ideas and we have helped Celts across the world. We never expect any issue to totally cover a theme or subject, and we sometimes return to that theme for more twists and turns. Our goal is simply to provide an enjoyable departure from your daily routine, and to preserve and coordinate bits and pieces of Celtic culture. We also stray to other cultures where it serves the purpose or explains the story better. But the core intent, at least for me, is to be the old "guide" who directs you beyond the mountains of misplaced punctuation marks, climbing over the 26 stumbling blocks of the alphabet, to that magic place where the digits hit the screen in an explosion of Celtic culture.



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