

Celtic Guide

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INSIDE

**RED
HARLAW**

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From the Editor

Some may wonder why we would dedicate an entire issue of Celtic Guide to one single-day battle, which took place over 600 years ago. Others might argue that the Battle of Red Harlaw was the single most important battle in defining Scotland's character and ultimate history.

There is a lot of information to read in this issue and it may, at times, seem to contradict itself. Such is the history of Red Harlaw. It has garnered a wide variety of opinions and "facts" as to its initial cause, in the number of troops deployed, and even in its outcome.

In a world where the 30-second sound bite rules, it is sometimes difficult to help readers in understanding such a complex historical event. I'm counting on the fact that Celtic Guide readers are different; that they come from the mold where there can never be enough chances to learn something new; that they understand history is often colored by victory or sour grapes, but that somewhere in the middle may lie the truth; that they know behind nearly all legend and myth there is some ring of truth, some seed that started the story, even if all the facts don't line up; and, finally, that there is worth to be found in a good story, and in preserving our "Celtic" heritage – ever important to the development of the modern world, ever producing images of valor and love, of courage and steadfastness, ever stirring the hearts of those of us who have followed.

Though I will have a fair amount of my own writing in this issue, I also have had help from other quarters, especially Albert Thomson, the progenitor of the organization from Aberdeen, Scotland – The Freens O' Reid Harlaw. Other new authors like Sharron Gunn (British Columbia) and Andy Douglas (Scotland), plus returning author Victoria Roberts (Pennsylvania) will line up, too, in an effort to once again provide some great reading – rediscovering a hidden history, and celebrating a dramatic era in the story of humankind. Even "Henceforth Tales," this month featuring Clan Cameron, has a Harlaw twist.

Accompanying the Red Harlaw stories will be one story, written by another new Guide author Ronald Henderson, which at first might seem unrelated. It involves the Stone of Destiny, and why it is so important is that the theft of this sacred Irish/Scottish coronation stone from Scotland (be it the authentic stone or a substitute or mistaken stone) began much of the turmoil that led up to Harlaw. Though Harlaw took place over one hundred years later, the defeat of the Scots by Edward of England (who was responsible for the stone's removal to England) led to disarray in Scotland, which gave birth to the Bruce/Stewart dynasty and which continued to bring Anglo-Saxon and Norman influence into a once predominantly Celtic/Norse society. The conflicting land claims of Bruce/Stewart descendants is one reason given for Red Harlaw. A battle between Highland Norse-Celts and the Lowland "melting pot" is the other reason given. Once again, the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

Jim McQuiston
Editor & Publisher

Harlaw Timeline

EDITOR'S NOTE: This timeline spans over a century of Scottish history providing critical information in the understanding of the Battle of Red or Reid Harlaw.

19 March 1286: Alexander III, King of Scotland, aged 44, dies in a fall from his horse en route to meet with his new bride Yolande de Dreux, in Fife. Once Yolande's child miscarries or is stillborn, Alexander's granddaughter Margaret, "The Maid of Norway" becomes Queen of Scots, at the age of three.

September 1290: Margaret, Queen of Scots, sails from Bergen, Norway, for Leith and an arranged marriage with Edward, the young heir to the English throne. This is designed to insure a stable future relationship between England and Scotland. On 26 September she dies of sea sickness (or possibly at the hands of political enemies) en route, at the age of seven. With her dies the House of Dunkeld that has ruled Scotland since 1058.

November 1292: Edward I of England oversees the selection between competing claims to the Scottish throne, on condition he is acknowledged as Lord Superior of Scotland. Thirteen competitors are narrowed down to two. John Balliol is selected over Robert Bruce (grandfather of the hero Bruce) and is crowned King of Scotland on 30 November 1292.

1295: The Treaty of Paris, which offers military support to Scotland from France, is taken by Edward I as a declaration of war and is, in effect, the start of the Wars of Independence.

30 March 1296: Edward I attacks Berwick-upon-Tweed; two-thirds of the 12,000 residents are massacred. The Scots retaliate with a raid on 8 April and atrocities of their own in Hexham.

27 April 1296: Edward I defeats the Scots at the Battle of Dunbar, opening the way to his conquest of the country and taking many

prisoners, including Andrew Murray and John III Comyn.

8 July 1296: John Balliol resigns his kingdom to Edward I at Montrose. Edward takes the *Stone of Destiny* back to London after the Scottish nobility have signed their loyalty over to him. He appoints the Earl of Surrey as Governor of Scotland.

May 1297: William Wallace sacks Lanark Castle, killing the Sheriff and other English in the town. It is the spark for more widespread rebellion.

Summer 1297: Andrew Murray leads a revolt in the north, captures a series of English castles in the Highlands and the north east, and besieges Urquhart Castle.

11 September 1297: William Wallace and Andrew Murray comprehensively defeat the English army at the Battle of Stirling Bridge. Murray subsequently dies of wounds suffered during the battle.

29 March 1298: William Wallace is titled "Guardian of Scotland", but still acts in the name of John Balliol

22 July 1298: William Wallace is badly defeated by Edward I at the Battle of Falkirk. Wallace subsequently resigns as Guardian and drops out of sight.

May 1303: Edward I invades Scotland once more, with a view to subjugate the country once and for all.

3 February 1304: The Community of Scotland under the Guardianship of John III Comyn or the Red Comyn, agrees to a peace treaty with Edward I.

22 April 1304: Edward I besieges the last Scottish stronghold, Stirling Castle. It surrenders three months later when food runs out.

3 August 1305: William Wallace is captured near Glasgow after periods spent as a guerrilla

fighter, and also abroad. He is tried in London on 23 August, and executed. Robert Bruce, the grandson of the Robert Bruce who had competed with John Balliol for the crown in 1292, kills John III Comyn, the Red Comyn, head of one of the most powerful families in Scotland (and his only rival as future king) in a church in Dumfries. The circumstances surrounding this event are still shrouded in mystery.

25 March 1306: Robert Bruce moves to fill the power vacuum in Scotland and crowns himself King Robert I.

10 May 1307: At the Battle of Loudoun Hill in Ayrshire, Robert Bruce defeats forces loyal to the English.

7 July 1307: King Edward I of England dies.

Friday, 13 October 1307: King Philip IV rounds up the Knights Templar in France as part of his campaign to gain control of the Order's vast wealth. In 1312 he persuades Pope Clement V to dissolve the Order. Templars reportedly land on the Isle of Mull, 1313, and support Robert Bruce, 1314, in battle against the English.

24 June 1314: An English army under King Edward II, sent to relieve Stirling Castle, is defeated by Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Bannockburn. Edward II only narrowly escapes with his life. It is the most notable single military victory in Scottish history. Donald of Harlaw's grandfather Angus Og supports Bruce in battle.

6 April 1320: The Declaration of Arbroath is addressed to the Pope in an effort to have him recognize Robert the Bruce as King of Scotland (and remove the excommunication that followed his murder of the Red Comyn in a church). It defines the relationship between the Scottish King and the Scots people as near equals.

July 1328: Robert Bruce's four year old son David is married to Joan, the seven year old sister of Edward III of England.

7 June 1329: Robert Bruce dies aged 55. He is succeeded by his five year old son, David II.

1329: The title Dominus Insularum or "Lord of the Isles" is first used, by John of Islay in a

letter to Edward III of England. John marries the great granddaughter of Robert Bruce – Margaret Stewart (daughter of Robert II) and their son follows as second Lord of the Isles and becomes known to history as Donald of Harlaw.

1336: Edward III invades yet again in support of Edward Balliol.

February 1337: Sir Andrew Murray begins a campaign that slowly rolls back the English occupation of Scotland. Edward Balliol flees, for the final time, in May, only to find that Edward III is more interested in war with France than war with Scotland.

1338: Sir Andrew Murray dies and his role as Guardian of Scotland on behalf of David II passes to Robert Stewart, who is King David's nephew, but eight years older than him at 22.

June 1341: David II returns to Scotland from France, aged 17. In 1346 David II is captured by the English under Edward Balliol and taken to London.

October 1357: David II is released in return for a ransom of £65,000. He returns to a country heavily under the influence of Robert Stewart, who has been acting as "King's Lieutenant" for eleven years.

23 February 1371: David II dies at Edinburgh Castle. He is succeeded by his nephew, Robert Stewart who becomes King Robert II, and the founder of the Stewart dynasty that is to rule Scotland for most of the next three hundred years. Robert II is the grandson of Robert the Bruce by his daughter Marjory. Robert II marries most of his several children off to nobles throughout Scotland to cement his hold on the country. However, this move later results in many contests for ownership of land, including the Battle of Red Harlaw.

November 1384: An ailing Robert II is sidelined in favour of his own eldest son and heir, John, Earl of Carrick, who becomes Guardian of the Kingdom.

1387: Donald of Islay, soon to be Donald of Harlaw, becomes the 2nd Lord of the Isles following the death of John of Islay. Donald,

is married to Lady Margaret Leslie, the only daughter of Euphemia, Countess of Ross and her husband Sir Walter Leslie. Euphemia, Countess of Ross, now a widow, resigned her claim to the Earldom of Ross and enters a convent. Her son-in-law, Donald, Lord of the Isles, eventually decides to claim the title in right of his wife Lady Margaret to protect his scant foothold on the west coast and islands of Scotland.

December 1388: John, Earl of Carrick, who has been injured while riding, is replaced as Guardian of the Kingdom by his younger brother Robert, Earl of Fife.

April 1390: Robert II dies, and is succeeded by his eldest son John, Earl of Carrick. He becomes, confusingly, King Robert III because the Scots feel John is an unlucky name for a King: and because for him to become John II would acknowledge John Balliol as John I, and so revive a claim to the throne that had been sold to Edward III of England in 1356.

17 June 1390: Alexander Stewart, youngest son of Robert II and younger brother of John, Earl of Carrick (now Robert III) and Robert, Earl of Fife, destroys Elgin Cathedral in reprisal against Bishop Alexander Bur. He is better remembered as the Wolf of Badenoch and is said to have led a band of “wild, wikkid hielandmen.”

24 July 1394: Alexander Stewart, 1st Earl of Buchan, the Wolf of Badenoch dies, according to legend after playing chess with the devil at Ruthven Castle. His son, also named Alexander, eventually becomes Earl of Mar and it is he who leads troops against his own first cousin, Donald, Lord of the Isles, at Harlaw – the two men both being grandsons of Robert II and having claims to the Earldom of Ross.

1398: Robert III’s eldest son, David, is created 1st Duke of Rothesay and Robert III’s younger brother, Robert, Earl of Fife, is created Duke of Albany.

1399: The General Council takes power from Robert III, now in poor health, and gives it instead to David Stewart, 1st Duke of Rothesay, who they make the King’s Lieutenant.

1401: The Duke of Rothesay is captured by his uncle Robert, Duke of Albany, and imprisoned in St Andrews Castle. He is subsequently moved to Albany’s home at Falkland Palace.

March 1402: David Stewart, 1st Duke of Rothesay dies at Falkland Palace as a result, the General Council decides, of “Divine Providence”. Others say the cause is starvation. This leaves David’s 7 year-old brother James as heir to the throne still held by Robert III. There are fears that James, in turn, will not be safe from the ambitions of his uncle Robert.

February 1406: An army of James’s supporters is defeated by the Duke of Albany at Edinburgh. James is taken for safety to Bass Rock, off North Berwick.

22 March 1406: James is captured by pirates off Flamborough Head in Yorkshire while en route to sanctuary in France. They then hand him over to Henry IV of England.

4 April 1406: King Robert III dies in Rothesay Castle after hearing the news of James’s capture. James therefore succeeds to the throne as James I at the age of 11 and as a prisoner of the English. Robert, Duke of Albany becomes Governor of Scotland in his nephew’s absence. Albany refuses or is forced to delay payment of ransom for King James I.

August 1406: Donald, Lord of the Isles, sends his nephew, Hector Maclean, to England to speak with young King James I. Five years later, just prior to the Battle of Red Harlaw, Donald’s chaplain holds talks with King Henry IV of England on James’s behalf.

24 July 1411: At the Battle of Red Harlaw, 20 miles north of Aberdeen, the highland army of Donald of Islay, Lord of the Isles meets the lowland army of Alexander, Earl of Mar, son of the Wolf of Badenoch. At stake for Mar is the Earldom of Ross and control of northern Scotland. At stake for his cousin Donald is his entire Gaelic kingdom, and the return of the true king to Scotland. After an inconclusive day of heavy fighting and heavy casualties, Donald retires to Inverness and Alexander to Aberdeen.

Red Harlaw

By Jim McQuiston

On July 24, 1411, it is said that the bloodiest battle ever fought on Scottish soil took place near Aberdeen, between Celtic Highlanders and Anglo/Norman Lowlanders - at stake the very crown of Scotland. The battle has been remembered, variously, as "The Red Harlaw" or "The Reid Harlaw" - the word "red" referring to the great amount of blood spilled on both sides. It has been immortalized in many songs such as "The Battel of Hayrlau," "Battle of Harlaw," and many more. It is known in Gaelic as *Cath Gairbheach*

It may well be that this confrontation was ultimately over the control of Scotland, but the typical stereotypes and motives assigned to the leaders of each side, and their followers, may be a bit far from the truth.

Leading one side in the battle was Donald MacDonald, Lord of the Isles, and grandson of King Robert II of Scotland. He would become known to history as Donald of Harlaw.

Commanding the other side was Alexander Stewart, Earl of Mar, also a grandson of King Robert II.

These first cousins obviously shared much of the same bloodline and each had a reasonable claim to the Earldom of Ross, a vast territory extending northward to Caithness, westward to the Isle of Skye, southward to Urquhart Castle and Loch Ness, and eastward to Inverness, with superiority over the outlying lands from Nairn to Aberdeen.

He who controlled the shire of Ross controlled the bulk of the Scottish Highlands, and thereby much of Scotland itself.

Donald's mother was Margaret Stewart, daughter of Robert II and his wife, Elizabeth Mure (or Muir), of Rowallan. Robert II was, of course, a Bruce and a Stewart. Elizabeth, in turn, had a mix of some very familiar Scottish names in her heritage including Montgomery, Lindsay, Balliol, and Comyn.

Donald's father was Good King John of Islay, son of Angus Og McDonald. Angus fought at Bruce's side at Bannockburn, and earned Clan Donald the privilege of serving at the right hand of the Scottish kings in future battles.

Sir Walter Scott immortalized Angus Og's service in these lines attributed to Robert Bruce:

*"One effort more, and Scotland's free!
Lord of the Isle, my trust in thee . . ."*

Donald was educated at Oxford University - the oldest university in the English-speaking world. Like his father and grandfather before him, he had a loose, intermittent friendship with the king of England. On September 10, 1405, Henry IV sent commissioners to treat for an alliance with Donald.

In 1389, Donald was a party to the treaty of peace between France and England, as an ally of the latter.

Not too long before Harlaw, Donald sent an emissary to speak with the imprisoned James I, the true king of Scotland, and later to meet again with the English king. James was being held for ransom and his uncle, Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany, seemed perhaps content to let him stay a prisoner, while Albany ruled Scotland as Regent. During this period, Scotland became quite disorganized and Donald and others looked to England to either release James or to step in and quell the violence and confusion.

As Scott put it, in his poem "Lord of the Isles", Donald continued the family legacy of being . . .

*"The mate of monarchs, and allied,
On equal terms, with England's pride."*

About the only thing purely Celtic about Donald was that his area of Scotland generally still

spoke the old Gaelic or Celtic language, although he himself was versed in Gaelic and English and mostly likely in Latin and French.

In Aberdeen, it is true that the Old Scots language, based for the most part on English, was the principal language. However, even as late as the reign of James VI, the king boasted that his kingdom had a town whose only street was so long that the people living at one end of it could not understand the language of the people living at the other end. He was speaking of Nairn, just north of Aberdeen, which was still split into Gaelic and Scots-speaking areas – this, long after Harlaw.

At the time of the battle there was not yet such a delineation between Lowlander and Highlander, as most tales of Harlaw would lead one to believe. Instead, there was an amalgamation of races throughout Scotland, slowly separating into old and new cultures.

In addition to its Celtic origins, Clan Donald was heavily infused with Viking blood. Through his mother, and through earlier marriages in his family line, Donald also had his share of Norman and Anglo-Saxon blood. In fact, his veins were a melting pot of nearly every major race ever to occupy Scotland.

Also, while Donald did descend on Aberdeen from the north, his home base was on the Isle of Islay, longitudinally on par or below Glasgow and Edinburgh, and far south of Aberdeen. Had he intended to steal the crown of Scotland he could have traveled a much shorter distance to Edinburgh by simply heading east. Instead, he followed the Great Glen to Inverness because his goal was, as evidence would seem to indicate, to gain Ross, not to conquer Scotland.

To paint Donald as a savage Celtic Highlander bent on the conquest of all of Scotland is to grossly simplified his nature and intentions.

Clan Donald and the Bruce/Stewart dynasties were linked in the marriage of King John of Islay and Princess Margaret Stewart. John eventually received confirmation of his charters to most of the western isles and much of the southwestern coastline of Scotland. Included in these lands,

for the first time in Clan Donald history, was ownership of the Isle of Skye, held by Donald's brother, Godfrey, from 1389 until 1401, at which time Skye was declared part of Ross.

Good King John is first on record using the title "Lord of the Isles" although his ancestors had been styled "Ruler of the Isles" and "Thane of Argyll".

Donald followed his father as second Lord of the Isles in 1387.

Only ten years had passed since Skye had been taken from Clan Donald when Donald made his bid for the Earldom of Ross. Donald's principal claim to Ross came from his marriage to Margaret Leslie, daughter of Sir Walter Leslie and his wife, Euphemia, Countess of Ross.

Euphemia's father, William, the 5th and last Earl of Ross from the old de Ross dynasty, died without male issue, leaving Ross in her hands. Euphemia's mother was none other than Mary McDonald, daughter of Angus Og McDonald and an aunt to Donald of Islay. Euphemia was his first cousin.

Donald was also related to Euphemia through the Bruce line. Her paternal grandmother was Matilda Bruce, daughter of Robert the Bruce, an aunt to Donald's mother, Margaret, and thus a great aunt to Donald.

Therefore, Donald McDonald and his wife, Margaret Leslie, were first cousins, one generation removed, through the line of Angus Og McDonald, and second cousins, once removed through the line of Robert the Bruce.

It seems Donald of Harlaw had an interest in Ross from several points of view.

Beyond his familial relationship to these people, Donald also realized that if Albany, Regent of Scotland, or members of his family, were to add Ross and Skye to their already vast landholdings north of the Grampian Mountains, and to their control over the government at Edinburgh, Donald would be hemmed in on all sides. He stood to lose not only his old connection with Ross and Skye but even his foothold in the western isles and along the western coast of Scotland.

In addition, Donald may have been reclaiming Ross in the name of the young king of Scotland,

James I, who languished in English custody for eighteen years while his uncle, Albany, served as the “false king” of his domain. It was not long before Harlaw that Donald’s representatives spoke to both the prisoner, King James I, and to his captor, the king of England. Perhaps it was a coincidence but the Battle of Harlaw was fought on the eve of the Feast of St. James.

On the death of her husband, Walter, Euphemia, Countess of Ross, remarried to Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan, a son of Robert II, who became known, in later years, as “The Wolf of Badenoch”. Buchan, whose lands were very near to Ross, immediately claimed Ross as his own.

Euphemia’s son, Alexander Leslie, recovered Ross for a short time but complicated matters, even more, by marrying Isabella Stewart, daughter of Robert Stewart, the Regent of Scotland. Isabella was another grandchild of Robert II, since the Regent was also a son of King Robert II.

The death of Leslie, in 1402, saw the earldom pass to his only heir, his daughter, also named Euphemia - a “sickly, hunchbacked child.”

This younger Euphemia was taken into custody by the Regent, Duke of Albany, and he made provisions for her rights to Ross to be passed to his son, John Stewart.

The Stewarts now had two claims to Ross, one through the Regent’s son, John Stewart, and one through the Wolf of Badenoch, Alexander Stewart, though each claim was slightly dubious.

Robert II had many children, some legitimate, some not. In addition to Robert Stewart (Regent of Scotland and Duke of Albany), Margaret Stewart (wife of John, Lord of the Isles), and Alexander Stewart (the Wolf of Badenoch), another son of Robert’s was John, Earl of Carrick, who succeeded to the old lands of the Bruce family, and later to the kingship of Scotland, as Robert III.

James I was the son of Robert III and, while being spirited away to France for safekeeping, was captured and sent to England, where he remained under a heavy ransom. His uncle, Robert Stewart, thereby assumed the regency of Scotland.

Other children of Robert II were married off to

noblemen and heiresses in an attempt to cement his hold on Scotland. The end result, however, was the creation of many conflicting claims, including the claim to Ross.

Alexander Stewart of Buchan, the Wolf of Badenoch, earned his name, in part, when he attacked the royal burgh of Elgin, ravaging its cathedral, along with his band of “wyld, wykked Heland-men.” Elgin is located on the road between Nairn and Aberdeen. It seems this Alexander Stewart was more of a leader of savage Highlanders near Aberdeen, than Donald of Harlaw.

Alexander had a son, also named Alexander Stewart, who became Earl of Mar some say by nefarious means. It is said that he conspired in the death of the former Earl of Mar, stormed his castle and forced the earl’s widow to marry him, and to sign over the Earldom of Mar. It was this younger Alexander Stewart who was chosen to face off against Donald of the Isles, at Harlaw.

The Earldom of Mar was located in the shire of Aberdeen. Buchan was nearby. This father and son pair of Stewarts had a vested interest in seeing that Aberdeen and Ross remained in Stewart hands. The small village of Harlaw was located about 18 miles from Aberdeen and just happened to be the place Donald rested before attacking the town.

The younger Alexander Stewart met Donald, at Harlaw, while at the head of hundreds of knights and warriors from many illustrious families in the Aberdeen area bent on saving their community.

Donald’s force has been estimated at about 10,000, although some have taken poetic license and placed the number at 20,000, and even 90,000. He is said to have left the Isles with 6,000+ of his best warriors and collected additional support and troops from the Macintoshes, Mackenzies, and Macleans along the way. The chiefs of Macintosh and Maclean were among the estimated 900 to 1,000 men, from Donald’s side, who lay dead on the field after the day-long, bloody battle. It is also said that several women who were following this group were slain.

The Earl of Mar’s force has been estimated typically as 1,000, and sometimes as up to 2,000.

Again, poetic license has had Mar's forces reaching 60,000 at one point, but 1,000 or so warriors seems the more credible number. This group included many knights, much more heavily-armed than Donald's men, thus accounting for their ability to stall his advance.

Mar's troops left an estimated 600 dead on the field, with very few returning home. With such heavy losses both sides most likely also incurred a large number of wounded. In fact, it is said that not a single warrior from the Aberdeen area escaped without some type of wound and that "Hardly a leading family in Aberdeenshire but lost a laird or son." Included in the dead for this group were the Provost of Aberdeen Sir Robert Davidson, along with the Lords Saltoun and Ogilvy, James Scrymgeour Constable of Dundee, and the Irvines of Drum who were literally wiped out. The Lord Marischal, from the Kieth family, was captured and died a prisoner.

Some have said that, had Donald been satisfied with recovering Dingwall Castle and Inverness, he might have reached his goal of regaining Ross. However, there are at least two reasons why Donald may have decided to attack Aberdeen. First, an army travels on its stomach and Donald's group of possibly 10,000 strong must have eaten every available scrap of food from the Great Glen to Harlaw, over the several months of his campaign.

Aberdeen was a great commercial town by 1411, and the thought of something as simple as a good meal may have been a deciding factor. Secondly, the summer fighting season would be closing soon and crops were in the fields at home. Donald could not allow a force, which was formed specifically to thwart his objective, to stand, or even worse, to follow his weary troops back to their homelands. His only choice was to attack and decimate the enemy, now, while his troops were organized and superior in numbers.

Mar met Donald in the morning before he could begin his march toward Aberdeen. There seems to have been no attempt at strategy on either side. The two groups simply charged at one another and hand-to-hand combat ensued. While the Aberdeen

knights were able to break through Donald's line, his men attacked them from behind with battle axes and pikes, pulling many to the ground. Still, their armor and fighting skills allowed them to hold Donald at bay.

All day the battle raged. Individual contests between heroes from each side ruled the field. By nightfall, with both sides suffering many casualties, Donald retreated. In the following days he made for Inverness, and from there he returned to the Isles.

Within a few years Albany died and James I returned from England. One of his first orders of business was to execute most of the remaining members of the Stewart family who had delayed his ransom. Donald's son, Alexander McDonald, served on the jury which sentenced the Albany Stewarts to death.

As time went on, James I began arresting and often executing other Scottish noblemen. One of those he captured was Alexander McDonald, who he imprisoned for a short while. On his release, Alexander attacked Inverness in retaliation, and was once again arrested. This time he pleaded for his life, in his underwear and with a sword held to his throat - the handle offered to James I.

Alexander's life was spared, once again, and eventually he advanced to Lord of the Isles, Earl of Ross, and Justiciar of the Highlands. The current chiefs of Clan Donald, and of Clan Uisdean (the McDonalds of Sleat), are descended from Donald's grandson (and Alexander's son), Hugh of Sleat. McDonald of Sleat is also the premier, or longest-standing, barony of Nova Scotia, from 1622.

While Donald of Harlaw may not have been leading a savage hoard of Highlanders bent on capturing the crown, he was, most likely, defending what he considered to be the real and true Scotland.

On the other hand, the defenders of Aberdeen, many of whom still spoke Gaelic, were necessarily protecting their town from troops who were bent on gaining at least a decent meal, if not spoils of war, after their long trek up the Great Glen.

Oddly, both sides arguably won, as Donald's clan gained Ross and Aberdeen stood unmolested.

Harlaw Rediscovered

By Andy Douglas

There is little doubt of the strategic position of Inverurie, a town located in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, approximately 16 miles (26 km) north west of Aberdeen. Its occupation by people from many past civilizations testifies to its geographical importance, yet it is nearby Harlaw that commands the high ground.

At Inverurie we have good archaeological evidence of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Iron Age occupation, of two Roman camps, of medieval villages and even of Robert Bruce's army camp along with his several hundred supporters. Yet there is no evidence at all, that even a thousand men camped on top of Harlaw, let alone ten thousand (as has often been reported), while waiting for the knights of Eastern Scotland to organise themselves. In fact this is a relatively modern theory, used to explain a possible sequence of events.

Boece (1527) says that both sides at the Battle of Red Harlaw abandoned their camps after the conflict but does not stipulate where these camps were. Tytler (1845) says that Donald's camp fires along the Don River could be seen by the people of Aberdeen. But in fact the nearest MacDonald got to the Don was at Harlaw and that is located several miles from that river.

EDITOR NOTE: The Celtic Guide is very proud to reprint excerpts from a report compiled by Scottish researcher Andy Douglas, which presents considerable evidence on the logistics, the evidence and the historical recording of the Battle of Red Harlaw. While Andy insists he is not a professional historian, the detail of his original 30-page report on the battle might indicate the opposite.

If he had been following the Don, Donald would have arrived at Inverurie, not from the North as all evidence indicates, but rather from the South!

It is Davidson (1878), the master of the Earldom's genealogy, who imagines three columns of knights in full battle array, converging on the waiting army of Islesmen and Highlanders on top of Harlaw.

Although Simpson (1949) is critical of Davidson for this romantic notion of organized noble Scots Lords advancing in a three pronged attack, the geography, topography and records suggests that this may, although not necessarily coordinated, actually be the case.

The idea of the mounted men of Buchan harrying Donald's left wing, independently of Mar's centre, is quite conceivable, with the foot knights, men at arms and common soldiers following up behind as best they could, through the vast network of boggy wet ground that lies to the north east of Harlaw – the very direction they would have come from.

Simpson's detailed examination of the battle has "The Highlanders were encamped at Harlaw, awaiting attack" and "as a defensive position their camp was extremely well chosen." But he ends with "the reconstruction which I have thus offered of the battle of Harlaw is admittedly a conjectural one."

Buchanan says that it was "Alexander Earl of Marr and almost all the nobility beyond the Tay, at a Village called Harlaw, set themselves and their men in battle array against him." This is not Donald's men being set in battle array but Mar's. And it is not Balhalgardy, where Davidson died, where Drum died and where the final defense took place, but Harlaw

It is an odd sequence of events that sees the flower of Scots chivalry placed in the front of an

army, as a vanguard, and, unsupported, joining the battle. It was speed that was needed to get Mar's troops to the top of Harlaw.

I believe that the mounted Lowland men, including Dundee and Angus, were encouraged by Mar to make haste to the top of Harlaw and secure this important vantage point, just as the vanguard of the Highlanders arrived to do the same.

In a possible repeat of the raids of Angus, the mounted knights, overwhelmed by large numbers of fast moving Highlanders, were mobbed and killed within minutes. With the initial battle commenced the push was on for both commanders to get their main units there in support. Of the list of nobles killed at Harlaw the vast majority come from Angus.

We are told that MacLean commanded the right and, from the Harlaw poems and ballads, was killed in a dual with Drum. A physical look at the cairns marking this dual, their deaths and their "burials" are all on the west side of the battlefield, where Donald's right wing would have been.

Highland papers say Mar's left was driven back to a large cattle fold, which he defended until the next day. In the Ballad "The Battle of Harlaw" this is repeated – "And they drave back our merry men, Three acres breadth or mair".

This cattle fold, which, if it is the one revealed from aerial inspection, is located further down the hill not far from Davidson's cairn, marking where Aberdeen's Provost fell in battle.

The distribution of sites associated with the battle, includes the [second] Drum Cairn between Durno and Rayne and a medieval battle axe find between Lumphart Hill and Hillhead of Daviot. The twelve human remains east of Harlaw, and the site of a final encounter at Dead Men's Leys, Strathbogie, demonstrates just how widespread the engagement was.

Although centred on Harlaw and Balhalgardy, it is quite easy to imagine the battle raging over a far wider area, the fluid organization of two thousand Highlanders and Islesmen on Donald's

left wing intercepting the men from Buchan and Turriff marching south, Macintosh commanding all of Clan Chattan in the hill ranges to the north of Harlaw and about Rothienorman.

Donald assembled his Islander army at the castle of Ardtornish on the sound of Mull. Men from the Outer Hebrides, the Inner Hebrides, including Skye (which was part of the Earldom of Ross), the west coast mainland from Ross, Argyle, Carrick, possibly Antrim and Stranraer, all came. There were so many that Donald is believed to have borrowed or hired additional galleys from Henry IV of England.

This fleet would have taken no more than a few hours to sail to Inverlochy (Fort William). However the battle of Dingwall took place before the burning of Inverness so it is possible Donald sailed round the north of Scotland, as he toured his Earldom of Ross.

It was at Dingwall that he was challenged by an army of highlanders lead by Angus MacKay. Although heavily defeated and his brother killed, Angus was later to become Donald's son-in-law. From here it was to Inverness and the recruitment of the highland Clans of Moray and Badenoch.

Donald controlled the Great Glen with his man in Urquhart Castle. It is conceivable that part of his army, marching from the west coast, joined their sea borne allies at Inverness.

It was here that Donald's army set light to the town and burned down an oak bridge described as "one of the finest in the kingdom." A standard recruitment method for the time, Clan Chattan confederation and Clan Cameron saw the message and assembled to join the Lord of the Isles.

The road joining Aberdeen and Inverness has been a main route of communication for thousands of years. Some of Donald's Islanders may have continued to sail along the Morayshire coast, for raiding and recruitment (Boyne and Enzie), but most would have marched via Keith and Fochabers, pillaging as they went.

It is at Huntly, in the area then known as Strathbogie, that Donald had to choose one of

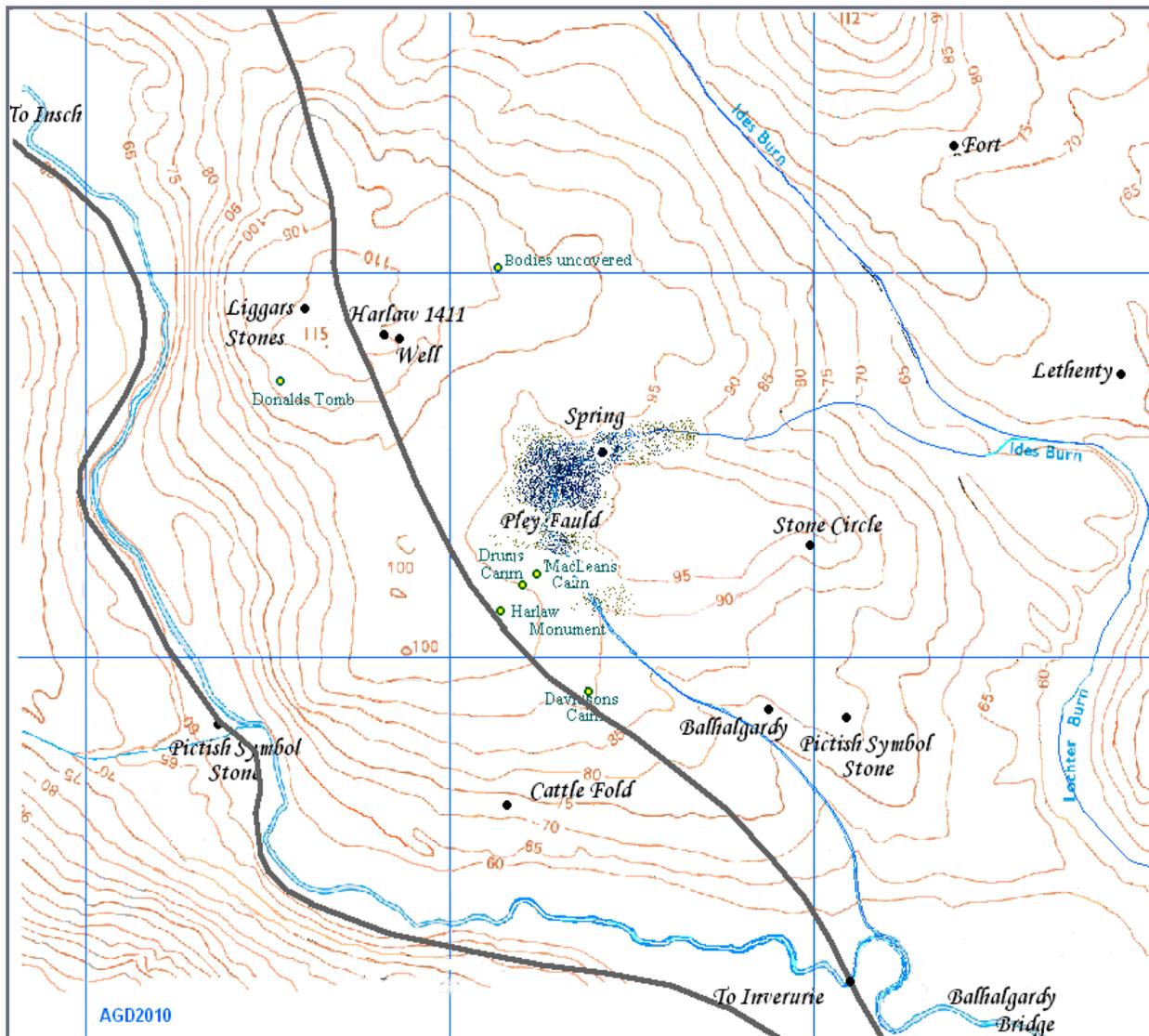
the two main routes to Aberdeen; the pass of Foudland leading to Inverurie and Oldmeldrum, or via Strathbogie and the Garioch.

We are told Donald came down Strathbogie, having devastated Moray, to harass and despoil, but at every junction Donald could have changed his route.

At Gartly and Clatt, he could have carried on south to waste Kildrummy and Alford, and then turned east right into the heartland of Mar and Aberdeenshire. Having led his army into the Garioch he could have changed course at Insch

and headed south via Auchleven and Keig. At Tillyfourie yet another direction was available – all routes leading eventually to Aberdeen.

We know now that he destroyed the Garioch as he marched passed the ancient hill fort of Dunnideer and onto Inverurie. Leslie writes “when Moray, Strathbogie and the nearest counties he had wrecked, he then comes to the Garioch” and Bower says they came in “such large and savage numbers like locusts, all those on domain lands who saw them were alarmed, and every man was afraid”.



Andy Douglas sent along this topographical map, which shows many of the locations mentioned in his very descriptive story of Harlaw. It seems, according to his research and that of many others, that the Battle of Red or Reid Harlaw took place over a very wide area, even wider than this map would indicate, even though the hill of Harlaw received top billing in the history books.

Donald's chosen route would have been watched by Mar's scouts, along with refugees bringing in news of Donald's progress. Mar's dilemma was not knowing where to move his own troops, for both blocking actions, and to harry the approaching enemy. Slowing up the Highland and Island host was imperative to give him more time to assemble his own troops.

But when would they arrive?

Simpson, when he imagines the movement of refugees and displaced folk by the oncoming thousands of Highlanders, emphasises the problem Mar had in mustering his army at a location, suitable to both intercept and confront Donald's army. When it became apparent that Donald was heading east through Garioch and to Inverurie, the race was on.

Having menaced the area for years as a young man, and also as the Earl of Mar for the past seven, he would have been only too aware of the strategic importance of Harlaw, commanding the high ground of Inverurie, a town in a geographical bottle neck, leading to the fertile plains of Aberdeen.

He would have dearly liked to place his whole army on top of that hill, but it was spread out over the shire, covering the anticipated routes of the invading warriors. In addition Alexander Ogilvie and his men had a 70-mile journey from Dundee and even the Frasers from Banff had 35 miles to march.

With men from Angus and Buchan still arriving, he would have had messengers sent out to call in these blocking units, to encourage with all haste the soldiers exhausted from a forced march, or troops still mustering in the north. "Not waiting for the rest of his auxiliaries," Mar committed his troops to battle in an attempt to stem the build up of the Islesmen.

Buchanan writes "in regard the greatness and the near approach of the danger did not admit the expediency of slow paced aid," showing that Mar, still with men to arrive, was forced to take the initiative because of how close Donald's army was located to Aberdeen.

It was only four weeks since the summer solstice and the day would have been long. Fighting beside a natural lochen in the middle of what is now known as the Pley Fauld the armies must have taken time out to rest, reorganize, treat the wounded and distribute water.

In these lulls, personal challenges were made. Perhaps even Irvine of Drum and Red Hector crossed swords against a background of cheering men, fighting for their honours in the most deadly of encounters.

But make no mistake, when the two sides re-engaged "the fight was cruel and bloody" (Buchanan) with "great slaughter on both hands" (Leslie).

What is undoubted is that Mar's command, very quickly took the defensive, holding back repeated assaults. Even as he committed newly arrived troops, his hard-pressed right flank, fighting on the far side of the field, were being overwhelmed, with the dead on his right wing including "almost all the gentlemen of Buchan".

Mar's troops were driven further down the hill, Provost Davidson killed as he fought a rearguard action. It was into a large cattle fold that the North East army fell back to, and it was here that they defended themselves all through the evening and into the night.

By morning Donald's army was retreating, both his commanders and nine hundred of his men lay dead. This new day saw Royal troops arriving, perhaps from Gowrie or even Fyfe; Donald's scouts relaying the news that this second army was only a day's march away.

With the Islesmen and Highlanders turning for home with all the plunder they could carry, these newly arrived reinforcements took up the chase and caught the rear part of Donald army, burdened with their spoils, at Strathbogie for a final engagement.

The Pley Fauld loch fed two burns that ran into the river Urie, stained with the blood of thousands of dead and wounded, this river did quite literally turn red during the battle now remembered as "**Reid Harlaw**".

Là Chatha Gharbhaich

-- The Day of the Terrible Battle 1411 *By Sharron Gunn*

The People

The battle of Harlaw is called *Là Chatha Garbhaich*, the 'Day of the Terrible Battle' in Gaelic. In Highland tradition, the battle of Harlaw was remembered as a victory of the Gaidheil (Gaels, Highlanders) over the *Goill*, (Foreigners, Lowlanders). But there were *Gaidheil* fighting with the king's army, and perhaps a few *Goill* with the Lord of the Isles.

During the High Middle Ages a half dozen languages were spoken in Scotland. But by 1400 there were two: Gaelic, spoken by most people in Scotland by about 1100, and Inglishe, the language brought to Scotland by the Angles who invaded and conquered Lothian in the seventh century. From the southeast this Germanic language was spread with the establishment of feudal sheriffdoms, baronies and burghs in the twelfth century.

The royal army at Harlaw was led by men who would not have looked out of place among the knights fighting with Henry V at the battle of Agincourt in 1415. Gilbert de Greenlaw was killed at Harlaw and buried in a churchyard near Inverurie. His tombstone shows him in plate armour with the small waist and bulbous chest so characteristic of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. He wore an open bascinet

Editor's Note: Sharron Gunn has a Master of Arts (honours) from the University of Glasgow, Scotland. She teaches Gaelic and Scottish history at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, and is writing a fantasy novel based on Celtic mythology. Sharron presents us with a wonderful article on Harlaw through her well rounded view of Scotland and the Gaelic language.



Gilbert de Greenlaw, based on his tombstone

(helmet) without a visor and his neck and shoulders were protected by a coif of mail.

The nobles with the Lord of the Isles wore armour considered out-of-date and suitable for infantry; they were not knights and they did not wear plate armour. For centuries before Harlaw a warrior's clothing consisted of a coat of chainmail (*màilleach*) worn over a quilted jerkin (*còtun*).



*A warrior of Clan Donald,
based on West Highland grave slabs.*

He wore the one-piece bascinet (clogaid) as well. The còtun could be worn without the mail and daubed with pitch for waterproofing and strength. The older armour was worn because it was relatively light-weight compared to plate armour and more suitable for fighting in the Highlands.

In medieval society, clothing indicated status; conservative forms of dress were used in Gaelic Scotland and Ireland as markers of language and culture. The Lordship was the centre of that culture in Scotland. Macdonald patronage of the arts is shown in poetry preserved in *The Book of*

the Dean of Lismore and in the distinctive style of west Highland grave slabs and high crosses. The Lords maintained close links with Gaelic Ireland; poets, musicians and warriors passed freely between the two countries, and the nobility of the West Highlands and Islands married Irish Gaels rather than Lowlanders.

The Claim

Robert Stewart (c. 1340-1420), Duke of Albany, was a son of Robert II of Scotland, the first monarch of the House of Stewart. By not paying the ransom of his nephew, James I, a captive in England, Albany ruled Scotland as regent for eighteen years.

In the 1390s 12 earldoms and lordships were held by members of the royal family. By the 15th century the Stewarts, Douglasses and Dunbars held 22 of 31 earldoms and lordships -- an incredible concentration of land in few hands.

Only one Highland magnate remained who was powerful enough to object to Stewart acquisitiveness -- Donald, Lord of the Isles, Albany's nephew.

When Alexander Leslie, earl of Ross, died in 1402 his young daughter, Euphemia, was his heir; she was also the grand-daughter of Albany, who assumed her wardship, which meant he had the right to marry her to whomever he pleased or not at all.

Donald of the Isles claimed the earldom through his wife Margaret, sister of the deceased earl. By the terms of a tailzie (entail) of 1370, she was next in the succession to the earldom if her niece, Euphemia Leslie, died without children.

In 1406 Albany ignored the MacDonald claim and gave the earldom to John Stewart, his second son. According to the MacDonald account, Albany brought up the heiress Euphemia in his own household where he 'persuaded her by flattery and threats to resign her rights of the earldom of Ross to John ... Earl of Buchan... much against her will. But others were of [the] opinion she did not resign her rights'. Within the earldom Donald was treated as the rightful heir.

The Poem

The brosnachadh was an incitement to battle written in Scottish Gaelic rather than the literary dialect common to Gaelic Scotland and Gaelic Ireland. The poem was likely composed before the battle to build the courage of the warriors and allies of Clan Donald. But, as it was remembered in the oral tradition, it has undergone changes which reflect the transformation in the language.

Scottish Gaelic

*A Chlanna Chuinn, cuimhnichibh
Cruas an am na h-iorghaile*

*Gu h-àirneach, gu h-arranta
Gu h-athlamh, gu h-allanta,*

*Gu beòdha, gu barramhail
Gu brìoghmhor, gu buan-fheargach*

*Gu calma, gu curanta
Gu cròdha, gu cath-bhuadhach*

*Gu dùr is gu dàsannach
Gu dian is gu deagh-fhulang*

...

*Gu gruamach, gu gràineamhail
Gu gleusda, gu gaisgeamhail*

...

*Gu mearghanta, gu mòr-chneadhach
Gu meanmnach, gu mìleana,*

...

*Gu teannta, gu togarrach
Gu talcmhor, gu traigh-èasgaidh*

...

*A Chlanna Cuinn Cèad-chathaich
An nois uair bhar n-aitheanta*

*A cuileanan confadhach
A bheithrichean buanta
A leòmhannan làn gasta*

...

*A Chlanna Cuinn, cuimhnichibh
Cruas an am na h-iorghaile.*

But some think it was composed after the forfeiture of the Lords of the Isles in 1493, a nostalgic reminder of the *Linn an Àigh* (The Era of Glory).

The poem consists mostly of adverbs, four each for the each letter used in the Gaelic alphabet. The resulting rhythm is incantatory and hypnotising. You can imagine the warriors becoming steamed up!

English Translation

Children of Conn, remember
Hardihood in time of battle

...

Be attentive, audacious
Agile, ambitious

...

Be bold, beautiful
Brawny, belligerent

...

Be confrontational, courageous,
Clever, combative

...

Be deliberate, destructive
Deadly, enduring

...

Be grim, gruesome
Gymnastic, glorious

...

Be mirthful, mortally-wounding
Mettlesome, militaristic

...

Be tight, triumphant
Tenacious, tripping

...

O Children of Conn of the Hundred Battles
Now is your time for honour

O raging whelps
O brawny bears
O splendid lions

...

O Children of Conn, remember
Hardihood in time of battle

The Poet

The composer was probably Lachlann Mòr MacMhuirich, one of a dynasty of poets who composed for the Lords of the Isles and, after the forfeiture of the Lordship, Clan Ranald. They are usually known as Curries in English. The MacMhuirichs claimed to be descended from Muireadhach Albanach ó Dálaigh (Murdoch the Scot O' Daly), a great poet with a temper. As payment for their work, poets and musicians usually had land free of rent. He had to leave Ireland for killing a man who dared ask him to pay rent to the king of the Uí Domhnaill (O' Donnell).

The Battle

Walter Bower described the 'Wild Scots' (Gaels) hurling themselves with blood-curdling screams against the level-headed 'Civilised Scots' (Lowlanders). But Hugh MacDonald was a seanchaidh of Clan Donald, who wrote an account of the battle which flattered his clan. According to his account, the the left wing of Mar's troops under Sir Alexander Ogilvy was routed by the MacLeans, then the central battalion under the earl of Mar was forced to give ground and was 'quite defeated'; Mar's right wing was forced back until it took shelter in a large cattle-fold, which they left after the battle was over to plunder the countryside while Donald's troops pursued the rest of Mar's troops to Aberdeen.

Aftermath

For centuries after, Gaelic poets referred to the courage of the MacDonalds after their victory at the battle of Harlaw; in *Taladh Iain Mhuideartaich* (Lullaby to John of Moidart) John MacCodrum said:

*Bha Clann Raghnaill treun aig Arla
Nuair broснаich Lachlann am bàrd iad.*

Clan Ranald was brave at Harlaw
When Lachlan the poet incited
them to battle.

Abbot Walter Bower, a Lowlander, believed Mar was victorious, but his history shows that the 'victory' was a costly one, and John Major, a good cleric and historian for the period, wrote:

Though it be more generally said amongst the common people that the Wild Scots were defeated, I find the very opposite of this in the chroniclers; only the Earl of the Isles [should be 'Lord of the Isles'] was forced to retreat; and he counted amongst his men more of slain that did the Civilised Scots. Yet these men did not put Donald to open rout, though they fiercely strove, and not without success to put a check to the audaciousness of the man.

There was no real danger that a decisive victory for Donald at Harlaw would have resulted in the political or linguistic transformation of Scotland. Bower believed Donald intended to 'bring under his submission the land as far as the Tay'.

The battle showed that the two sides were too evenly balanced for a decisive victory. But the battle increased the antagonism between Lowlanders and Highlanders. Harlaw continued to have a huge impact on the consciousness of Lowland Scotland as it added to fears of the 'other' who spoke a different language and dressed differently. But '... never since that day has Teutonic Scotland been in real danger from the Celtic race to whom it owed its being'.

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Henceforth Tales

by Cass & Deborah Wright

Cameron

The name Cameron signifies “Crooked Nose”; legend claiming the first of the line was a Celt of the Cymric race, migrating from what is now Wales, though an ancient manuscript in the chiefly estate suggests that this hearty Scotsman might actually have arrived from a cadet line of old Danish royalty; whichever was the case, he was known to have settled first around Dunbartonshire.

This credited progenitor, being a “bonnie fechter”, was engaged in many quarrels, and in one such earned the disfigurement which provided the name passed down to his descendants. After Dunbartonshire, he made his way to Lochaber; there, the Chief of the Fergusons, in need of warriors, welcomed the stranger, awarding him his daughter’s hand and a fair estate. Cameron vanquished his host’s enemies and settled in the region. Legend also states that during this time, Cameron sought the counsel of his old nurse; a noted witch, she gave Cameron a parcel of thongs, which she said to tie to a fox’s tail; the fox was then to be let loose, and all the land it would cover in escaping would become his.

The charms were performed with great ceremony, the fox released as the crone directed, and so he might travel faster along the course desired, they set dogs after him. The quarry fled through a little brook which passed through the meadow by a loch. What became of the fox, history does not relate, but from this origin the lands were named Lochiel, or “Lake of Thongs”, from which the Chief of the Camerons took his title, and is so addressed to this very day. Another early founder of the name has been colorfully quoted as Sir Hugh, Knight of the Wry

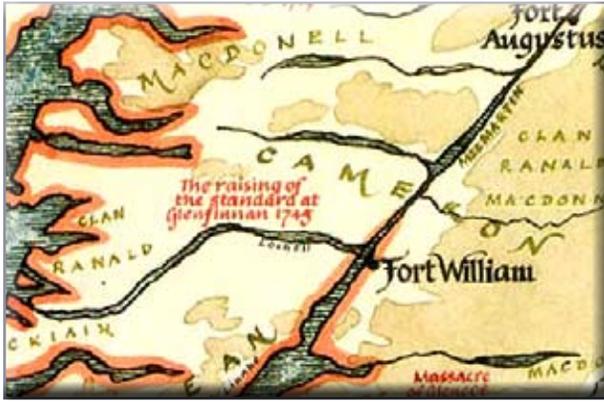
Nose, from whom sprang a succession of great men; family genealogies name also an ancestor known as Angus, who married a sister of Banquo, Thane of Lochaber, slain by Macbeth in the 11th century, showing long line of chiefs descended from this worthy, who distinguished themselves in many historic events of the country.

The most desperate feud in which the Camerons fought was at the end of the 14th century, over the lands of Glenluie & Loch Arkaig, to which others had laid claim. The Camerons penetrated as far as Invernahaven, before being met by a force of MacIntoshes, MacPhersons, and Davidsons. Just before the battle, a dispute took place between the Davidsons & MacPhersons, each claiming the right to lead the host.

MacIntosh sided with the Davidsons, resulting in Cluny MacPherson angrily withdrawing his men. Thus weakened, the remaining forces were defeated by the Camerons. That night, however, MacIntosh sent to the MacPherson camp a bard who recited to the sullen clansmen a poem emphasizing their alleged cowardice. Indignant with rage and shame, the MacPhersons launched a surprise attack upon the Camerons, whom they defeated and pursued with great slaughter to the confines of Lochaber.



Cameron Tartan and Shield



Among those fighting on the side of Donald, Lord of the Isles, at the battle known as Red Harlaw in 1411, was the famed clan captain, John Cameron of Lochiel, though it is largely believed that there might well have been roughly equal numbers of the Clan on either side, likely having much to do with the intensity of their feudal hatred for the MacKintoshes, whom were prominent as commanders for the Islanders who opposed Mar & his forces. Supporting this theory is the curious fact that despite their deep & bloody involvement at Harlaw, the slaughter therefrom made for virtually no appreciable decline in the man-strength of the Camerons, and in the decades that followed, their number increased dramatically. A later Lochiel, Donald Dhu, also feuding with the MacKintoshes, fought alongside the MacDonalds at Glen Lochy in 1544, when they defeated and slew Lord Lovat of Clan Fraser. In consequence of this last conflict, the Earl of Huntly was sent into Lochaber, seized Lochiel, and MacDonald of Keppoch, and took them to Elgin, where they were both beheaded.

The story is told how in one of these fights, Lochiel found himself in death grip with a gigantic English officer. They lay on the ground together, neither of them able to reach his weapon. At last the Englishman saw his chance, and reached to recover his sword; doing so he exposed his throat, which the Chief seized with his teeth and held till his foe bled to death. When scorned later for the savage act, he declared it was the sweetest bite he ever tasted. It is this Chief who is said to have slain with his own hand the last wolf ever seen in Scotland. On a later occasion, he attended the court of James VII in London to obtain pardon for a clansman. The King granted his request; then, intending to make

him a Knight, asked him for his sword so as to give special point to the honor. But the chief's sword was so rusted from the rainy journey that Lochiel could not draw it from its scabbard, and overwhelmed with shame, burst into tears. King James, however, tactfully consoled him. "Do not regard it, faithful friend," he said, "had the Royal cause required, your Sword would have left the scabbard promptly enough." He then knighted the Chief with his own royal weapon, which he bestowed upon him as a gift. This Chief died in 1719, at the age of 90, never having lost a drop of blood in any fight in which he had ever been engaged.

The son of this Chief joined the rising in 1715, and it was his son again — the grandson of Sir Ewen — who was the "Gentle Lochiel" of 1745; but for him it is likely that the clans would never have risen for Prince Charles Edward Stuart. Being held in great esteem in the Highlands, he went to meet the Prince at Borrodale, determined to have nothing to do with a rising; still, against his better judgment, he threw in his lot with Charles. Following Lochiel's lead, the other chiefs came in, and the standard was raised at Glenfinnan. Throughout the Uprising, it was his morality and decency which restrained the Highlanders from acts of plunder. During the march to Derby, an Englishwoman, who had hidden her little boy in fear that all Scotsmen were cannibals, declared, as Lochiel entered her house: "Come out, my child, this man is a gentleman; he will not eat you!" So famed for his compassion and gentility, Lochiel died a hero in exile after having both his ankles shattered by grape shot at Culloden.

This material is just a sampling of one of the 60 clan names and legends appearing in the upcoming book -

Henceforth Tales

by Cass & Deborah Wright

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

- DW

The Raven and the Wolf

EDITOR'S NOTE: The two cousins whose forces met on the field of battle at Harlaw could well be said to be represented by the Raven and the Wolf. One ancient MacDonald symbol was the Raven - see explanation to the right. Donald of Harlaw's cousin and adversary, Alexander Stewart, Earl of Mar, was the son of the notorious Wolf of Badenoch, a son of King Robert II and brother to Donald's mother, Margaret Stewart.

It is interesting to note, in the changing fortunes of that time, that the Wolf once held the position of Justiciar of Scotland – a title which was later conferred on Donald's son, also named Alexander. Celtic Guide regular Victoria Roberts supplies us with a great little story on the Wolf.

The Wolf of Badenoch

by Victoria Roberts

Alexander Stewart (1343-1394), Alisdair Mor mac an Rìgh, the Wolf of Badenoch, was the illegitimate son of King Robert II and was known as one of the most evil men in Scottish history. Although the times themselves were barbaric, the man stood out and was feared by many.

Alexander was the first Earl of Buchan from 1382 until his death. He held lands and titles of large territories in northern Scotland before he eventually lost the majority of his holdings. He ruled the lands of Badenoch with a cruel hand, burning the homes of those who crossed his path or displeased him.

Always on the hunt for more, Alexander extended his territories in 1371 by leasing Urquhart lands from his younger half-brother and then by obtaining possession of the Barony of Strathavon which bordered his own Badenoch lands. He eventually found his mate and married Eupheme, or Euphemia, Countess of Ross, who also conveniently held the lands of Lewis, Skye, Dingwall and part of Aberdeenshire. He moved in swiftly and was granted the title Earl of Buchan only days after his marriage.



This well-known 1845 drawing by MacIain is entitled "Lord of the Isles" and may well be meant to represent Donald of Harlaw, perhaps the most war-like of the Lords. The inset shows a Raven, which was one of the symbols of the ancient Lordship. One MacDonald crest is described as "A Raven sable on a rock azure." To this day, the Glengarry MacDonalds of Scotland have a raven on their heraldic arms, and their war cry is Creagan-an Fhithich - or "Raven's Rock" after a landmark on their ancestral lands.

The Wolf blamed his wife for the fact that they had no children while he fathered around forty illegitimate children from different women. When he sought intervention from the Bishop of Moray to dissolve his marriage, to his surprise, the Bishop sided with Eupheme and then excommunicated him.

The Stone of Destiny

Perhaps a better word for this ancient stone would be 'The Enigma Stone', as everything about it seems shrouded in mystery. Over the centuries, this stone, the ancient crowning stone of the Scots, has been known by many names; among them 'The Eastern Stone' mentioned in the Gaelic poem 'The Birth of Aedan Mac Gabhrain' around 1060 A.D., 'the Royal seat of Marble', 'the Pharaoh's Stone', 'the Stone of Celebrated Memory', 'the Stone of Scotland', 'the Regal Stone', 'the Stone of Scone', 'Jacob's Pillow', 'the Coronation Stone', and the name by which it was known in Gaelic - the 'Lia Fail' - translated as the 'Stone of Destiny'.

According to legend, this ancient stone had been brought to Scone from Dalriada, (Argyll) by Kenneth Mac Alpin c. 850 A.D. It had previously been brought to Argyll from Ireland by Fergus Mac Erc, a Dalriadan king, sometime in the 5th century. Prior to this it had been transported to Ireland via Spain by Scota, the daughter of an Egyptian Pharaoh; both cautiously identified by Egyptologist Lorraine Evans in her book "Kingdom of the Ark" as Princess Meritaten and her father, Pharaoh Akhenaten.

Scota is supposed to have fled Egypt with her Greek husband Gathelos, or Gaidelon, and his followers sometime around 1335 B.C. following a rebellion in which Akhenaten was overthrown by Horemheb, the army commander. The 'Scots', it is said, after a period in Spain followed by an interval in Ireland, eventually settled in Dalriada and took their name from this Princess Scota, to become the people known throughout history as the 'Scotti'.

Some intriguing evidence of an Egyptian contact and influence during this period does appear to have been found in Tara, Ireland, when an ancient stone-age burial chamber, known as the 'Mound of Hostages' was excavated in 1955. Although the mound itself is Neolithic (c.3000B.C.), the remains of a much later



The stone typically considered to be the true Stone of Destiny.

Bronze Age inhumation were discovered, which turned out to be that of an 18 year old youth who was buried with a bronze dagger and pin, and wearing a necklace of Egyptian 'Faience' beads. These beads, a type of ceramic, were found to be of genuine Egyptian origin and were quite unknown in Northern Europe. The skeleton was carbon dated to c. 1350 B.C. and this date, as we have seen, given the usual hundred years or so normally allowed for correction either way that is such a feature of carbon dating, was just around the time that Scota and her husband are supposed to have fled Egypt.

The problem with all of this is that Scota does not appear to be an Egyptian word. It looks like Greek, and, recalling that Scota's husband was a Greek, and the tenet that the Greeks are reputed to have a word for everything, we can fairly confidently surmise that 'Scota' must indeed mean something. Before his readers reach for their Greek dictionaries, however, the author begs their forbearance, and asks them to read a little further.

The stone which currently lies in Edinburgh Castle, along with the Honours of Scotland, and is reputed to be the same one which King Edward I of England stole in 1296 A.D. measures approximately 26 1/2 x 16 1/2 x 10 1/2 inches (670 x 420 x 265 mm). It is acknowledged by geologists as being of Scottish sandstone, and may have been quarried in the region of Scone near Perth.

This rectangular block of sandstone is considered by a great many people to be the very stone which Kenneth Mac Alpin reportedly brought with him from Argyll to Scone over a thousand years ago. Yet, if we take the trouble to compare this coronation stone with the stone's early descriptions, we get quite a surprise.

A clear and contemporary eyewitness description of the 'Stone of Scone' was made by an Englishman, Walter de Hemingford (also known as de Guisborough), who attended the coronation of John Balliol in 1292 A.D. He depicted it as "Concavus quidem ad modum rotundae cathedrae confectus", i.e. "hollowed and made in the form of a round chair". The 14th century English 'Chronicles of Melsa' also describe the Stone of Scone as being "hollowed out, and partly fashioned in the form of a round chair". The coronation stone certainly has an incised groove forming a rectangular panel measuring 17 x 9 inches (430 x 230 mm) on its upper face, but this is not the same as being 'hollowed out'. Neither is the shape of the stone round, nor does it resemble a throne or chair by any stretch of the imagination.

The name 'The Stone of Destiny' has come to us from a poor English translation of the Gaelic words 'Lia', a great stone, and 'Fail', meaning fatal; hence 'fate', and subsequently 'destiny'. However, the 'Lia Fail' was originally known to the Irish as the 'Lia Faileas' and Faileas doesn't mean fate at all, but rather spectral, or spiritual shadow. It appears that this confusion has come about from a perfectly simple word contraction made a very long time ago by an Irish scribe, and the error of mistaking 'fail' for 'faileas' has continued without question ever since.

Irish legends inform us that the Lia Faileas was one of the four great treasures given to the Celts by the De Danaans, a mythical god-like people of early Ireland; the other three treasures being an invincible sword, a fiery spear red with blood, and a cauldron of plenty from the fabled cities of Gorias, Finias and Murias respectively. The Lia Faileas, exclusively for use in the coronation of

kings, was gifted from the city of Faileas, which means 'the Place of Shadow'.

This brings us neatly to the word 'Scota' (the Pharaoh's daughter), which we find is not a person's name at all, but is indeed a Greek word, meaning 'darkness, shadow, obscurity and secrecy'. The great stone, we recall, was described as being round and hollowed, so it should come as no surprise to us to learn that the word 'Scotia' is an archaic architectural term which was used to describe a sunken moulding, or a hollow, so called from the dark shadow it casts. In other words, our Lia Faileas.

From what we have therefore discovered, it now seems that the old legends are correct in essence, except that the Scots or Scotti took their name not from the Pharaoh Akhenaten's daughter, Meritaten, otherwise known to us as Scota, but from her Greek husband Gathelos' great stone talisman; a sacred throne that they and their tribe took everywhere on their wanderings, eventually to end up in Scotland.

To Summarize:

The Gaelic words Lia Faileas and the Greek words Scota or Scotia mean the same thing in the end, which is 'the great stone of spiritual shadow, or spectral darkness'. It was round, hollowed, and partly shaped like a chair or throne. And no less an authority than the Roman historian Pliny the Elder (23A.D.-79A.D.) tells us that, "in Persia, a lens shaped stone was considered necessary at the consecration of a king."

Say what one may, but this certainly does not describe the block of sandstone that sat in Westminster Abbey for seven centuries. Kenneth Mac Alpin's throne has disappeared, probably lost during the Wars of Independence. The 'Stone of Destiny' lying in Edinburgh Castle today may have been used by the Picts as part of the installation ceremonies for their kings, perhaps like some form of footstool upon which an oath was taken, and it may have been used similarly by King Kenneth and his heirs. It is unlikely that we will ever know for sure. What we do know is that it was not the actual throne upon which

the ancient kings were crowned. If only we knew where it was...

Perhaps a good place to start would be the site of the Abbey of Scone that was sadly demolished during the Reformation in 1560. A proper archaeological dig might just give us what we are looking for. We may even find the final resting-place of Robert the Bruce's grandson, King Robert the Second (died 1390), who was buried somewhere within the Abbey.

Finally, consider this quotation from a book which was published in 2000 called "Uriel's Machine", written by Christopher Knight and Roger Lomas. They are discussing the 5000-years-old burial mound at Newgrange in Ireland, closely associated with tales of the De Danaans and High Kings.

"...we turned left up the Boyne valley, in the general direction of the Hill of Tara where the ancient High Kings of Ireland were acclaimed by placing their foot on the Lia Fail, the Stone of Destiny. Then, through the trees across the river, we suddenly saw the great white wall of Newgrange on the skyline. . . we had to stoop to walk up the narrow tunnel which was lined with enormous slabs of rock. The plan view of the chamber is in the form of a cross, and in each of the arms there is a beautifully worked stone basin..."

These 'basins' are hollowed out on the top, and would serve admirably as thrones. There is a particularly fine example of one of those stone basins inside the Neolithic chamber at Knowth, further along the Boyne valley. It is round and decorated with engravings. No one knows the purpose of these basins, nor just how old they are, yet they were obviously of some great significance. How coincidental that the round one should match so exactly the descriptions that we have of the Stone of Scone. Was each one of these basins a 'Lia Faileas'; and, perhaps more importantly, did a round one make its way to Scotland?



Stone Basin, or 'Lia Faileas,' inside the prehistoric chambered cairn at Knowth, near Tara in Ireland.

The author's research satisfies him that 'Scota' is a Greek word that means spiritual or spectral shadow. But he would like to draw the reader's attention to an Egyptian word which, if not exactly like the Greek word Scota, bears a strong enough resemblance to that word in its meaning and pronunciation to merit its consideration in this work. It may well pre-date the Greek word by thousands of years, and, if anything, only adds to the author's argument about the 'Stone of Destiny' being a misinterpretation of the original meaning which was the 'Stone of Spiritual, or Spectral, Shadow'.

The ancient Egyptians believed that a human being consisted of five separate parts or elements. Those were the body itself (ha'), the personality of the person ('ba'), the life force of the person ('ka'), the name of the person ('ren'), and, most significantly from our point of view, the shadow of the person. The shadow of the body was considered an important and integral part of an individual and its name, according to Egyptologists, was the 'shut'.

This word 'shut' obviously has links to all similar sounding words of Indo European and Aryan origin that have connotations with the shadow or spirit of the dead. The list seems endless. In English we have 'shade'. In the Celtic languages we have Welsh 'ysgod', Gaelic 'sgath' and Cornish 'scod'. In Gothic we have 'skadus' and we are already aware of the Greek word

‘scota’. For the simpler S or SH sound we can travel even further back in time and find in Hindi ‘saya’, and in Sanskrit ‘chaya’ both of which have similar meanings to those above and are likely to have been their progenitors.

It is, however, with the Egyptian word ‘shut’ that we are most concerned as we are attempting to define the link between the Princess Scota and the so called Stone of Destiny. The hieroglyph for this word is shown in two parts and consists of a sunshade, identifying the S or SH sound, and a loaf of bread, identifying the T sound. No hieroglyph was shown for the U sound. Egyptian, in common with many ancient scripts, rarely showed vowels in words and it remained to readers to interpret subjectively the sounds of words from their context within a sentence. ‘Shut’ may not have had a U vowel sound at all. It is just as likely to have been pronounced with an O sound, i.e. like ‘Shot’.

Could our word ‘Scota’ have developed, perhaps via Greek, from a metamorphosed

form of the Egyptian word ‘Shut’, the ‘spiritual shadow’ of a person? It’s not impossible. We cannot be sure at this distance in time just how the ancient Egyptians pronounced many of their words. They may have pronounced the SH in the word ‘shut’ with a quite discernible guttural sound, a bit like Schut (ch as in loch) or Schot. Indeed, the English word ‘shade’ was itself originally written ‘sceadu’. It is a fact that written alphabets are often quite inefficient at conveying the guttural sounds of many words.

There is another hieroglyph that the Egyptians made use of to convey the S or SH sound. It is a long, horizontal rectangular shape and was, apparently, the plan view of an artificial basin. We saw above that stone basins were important to the people who installed them in the chambered cairns at Knowth and Newgrange, though we know not why. The significance will not be lost on the reader however, that the S, or SH sounds, were identified to the ancient Egyptians by the hieroglyphs for both a sunshade and a basin.

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Ever wonder what the Celtic Cross is all about?

The Celtic Guide is honored and very appreciative to include Crichton Miller as one of its many contributing authors. There is undoubtedly no other person alive, or perhaps who has ever lived, who has more deeply studied the history and purpose of the Celtic Cross. In his writings, Crichton reveals how this ancient measuring device, which predates even the pyramids of Giza, was also used for maritime navigation. Like much of pre-Dark Age knowledge, its symbol was kept alive in the land of the Celt, in Ireland and Scotland, as grave markers, jewelry, and more.



**Available soon
on Kindle and
as eBook**



Crichton E M Miller

The author tells us -

Christ said “seek and you will find.”

“The truth will set you free” is often used as an ideal to aspire to. But is illusion more comfortable for the Human condition?

This work shows that most ancient religions were born out of measurement, and therefore modern science is descended from that same tree of knowledge. Yet the gulf between has become widened by a lack of understanding of archaic words and symbols.

The Celtic inheritance of ancient practical seafaring skills and the revealing symbols may unlock a door to a hitherto unseen history.

I am a Scottish sailor with an interest in ancient histories, philosophies and religion who has written of his discoveries so that others might tread the path behind the door that has remained firmly shut for a thousand years.

<http://www.crichtonmiller.com>

THE BATTLE: FROM THE CLAN DONALD PERSPECTIVE

Provided by Sharron Gunn

Hugh MacDonald, the seanchaidh of Sleat (17th century) wrote the only detailed account of the battle, which was flattering to Clan Donald, of course!

Donald immediately raised the best of his men, to the number of 10,000, and chose out of them 6600, turning the rest to their homes. They thought first they would fight near Inverness, but because the duke and his army came not, Donald's army marched through Murray (ie Moray) and over the Spey. The governor, Alexander Stewart, Earl of Murray [should say 'earl of Mar'] and John Stewart, Earl of Buchan, the governor's son, having gathered an army 9700 men, desired the Lord of the Isles to stay, and that they would meet them near Inverness and give them battle; but he would not leave his own men foraging in his own country of Ross. Therefore he marched forward, resolving to take his hazard near their doors, assuring himself of victory. Huntly, who was MacDonald's friend, sent him a private message, desiring him to commit no hostilities in his country, by the way of assuring him he would not own the governor's quarrels, and wishing Macdonald good success, and desiring him to be of good courage. The Lord of the Isles went forward till both armies met at Harlaw, a place in Garrioch, in the Braes of Buchan. There came several in the governor's army out of curiosity to see Macdonald and his Highlanders routed, as they imagined; others came to be rewarded by the governor, as they did not expect to see any other king in all appearance but he and his offspring; others came through fear of the duke's great authority.

Macdonald set his men in order of battle as follows. He commanded himself the main battle, where he kept most of the Islanders, and with the Macleods, John of Harris, and Roderick of Lewis. He ordered the rest to the wings, the right commanded by Hector Roy Maclean, and the left

by Calum Beg Macintosh, who that day received from Macdonald a right of the lands of Glengary in Lochaber, by way of pleasing him for yielding the right wing to Maclean, and to prevent any quarrel between him and Maclean. MacIntosh said he would take the lands, and make the left behave as well as the right. John More, Donald's brother, was placed with a detachment of the lightest and nimblest men as a reserve, either to assist the wings or main battle, as occasion required. To him was joined Mackenzie, and Donald Cameron of Locheill. Alister Carrich was young, and therefore was much against his will set apart, lest the whole of the brothers be hazarded at once.

The Earls of Marr and Buchan ordered their men in a main battle and two small fronts: the right front was commanded by Lords Marishall and Erroll; the left by Sir Alexander Ogilvie, Sheriff of Angus. They encountered one another; their left wing was forced by the Macleans, and the party on the Macdonald's right forced to give way. There was a great fold for keeping cattle behind them, into which they went. The Earl of Marr was forced to give ground, and that wing was defeated. Marr and Erroll posted to Aberdeen, the rest of Macdonald's men followed the chase.

There were killed on the governor's side 2550. The Lord Marishall was apprehended safe, and died in his confinement of mere grief and despair. Sir Alexander Ogilvy, Sheriff of Angus, was killed, with seven knights, and several other gentlemen. On Macdonald's side Maclean fell; he and Irvin of Drum fought together till the one killed the other. Drum's two brothers, with the principal men of that surname, were killed, so that a boy of the name, who herded the cattle, succeeded to the estate of Drum. Two or three gentlemen of the name of Munroe were slain, together with the son of Macquarry of Ulva, and two gentlemen of the name of Cameron. On Macdonald's side were lost in all 180. This battle was fought in 1411.

Macdonald burnt Aberdeen, had Huntly not dissuaded him from it, saying that by his victory in all appearance he gained his own, yet it was ridiculous for him to destroy the town, and the citizens would always join with him who had the upper hand. Now to prove these fabulous and partial writers, particularly Buchanan, it is well known to several men of judgement and knowledge, that Macdonald had the victory there, and gained the Earldom of Ross for four or five generations thereafter, and that MacIntosh, whom they say was killed, lived twenty years thereafter; and was with the Earl of Marr when Alexander Macdonald, Lord of the Isles, was captive at Tantallon, in the battle fought at Inverlochry against Donald Balloch, Alexander's cousin-germain [in 1431].

Patrick, Earl of Tullibardine [title created in 1628] said, as the other noblemen were talking of the Battle of Harlaw, "we know that Macdonald had the victory, but the governor had the printer."

Surely the Regent's party had not the advantage of the field, but those, who, as I formerly mentioned, fled on the Regent's right wing and went into the fold, the rest of Macdonald's army missing them, and following the chace [chase] when they were out of sight, those in the fold came out and plundered all they could get ahold of, which must be of very little battle value.

After the battle Macdonald returned again to the Isles, no opposition being made to him all his lifetime in Ross.

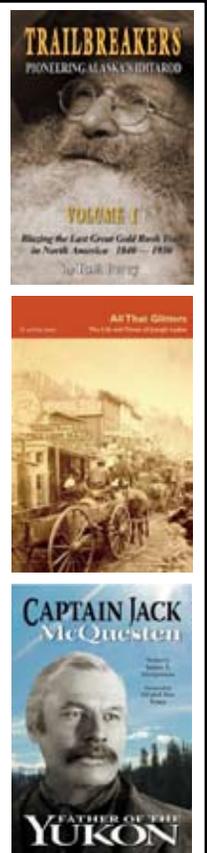
Many malicious and ignorant writers impute to Alexander several mischievous actions, whereof he was innocent. The courtiers about King James, and especially the offspring of Robert the Second, who were defeated by his father Donald at Harlaw, and disappointed in their designs, became his mortal enemies. These being always in the king's ears, made him believe that MacDonald's power was so extensive, that he ought to be crushed in time.

(MacPhail, v 1, 29-35)

Celts in the Yukon?

People of Celtic blood played some of the more substantial roles in exploring the Yukon River Valley and other parts of Alaska and Northwest Canada. The three books shown here have been written by some pretty darn good Yukon River historians.

- Book one *Trailblazers* is by Rod Perry, most likely the world's expert on the Iditarod race. Rod has been with the race since its beginning. He also produced a feature movie in Alaska. You can find out more about Rod's work at <http://www.rodperry.com>.
- The second book *All That Glitters* was written by Ed and Star Jones and is principally about the Frenchman Joe Ladue. These folks are two of the premier historians for Alaska and Yukon. Their stories are as authentic as it gets. Their book is on <http://www.amazon.com>.
- Finally, Celtic Guide publisher, Jim McQuiston, presents some great history of the Father of Alaska, Father of the Yukon, along with substantial information on the 25 years BEFORE the Klondike gold rush. His book *Captain Jack* is available on [amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and other book sites, with more info at <http://www.fatheroftheyukon.com>.



Neighbors to the North

Your Celtic Guide has been very happy to be part of this particular issue. I've made a handful of new friends, gained three new writers _ Sharron Gunn of British Columbia, and Andy Douglas and Ronald Henderson of Scotland, plus we've had a volunteer, Carolyn Emerick, build us a Facebook page at -

<http://www.facebook.com/CelticGuide>

The long imprisonment in an English prison of King James, shown to the right, and the intrigue that overtook Scotland resulted in perhaps the final amalgamation of the nation's melting pot, as conflicts throughout the kingdom, by Celtic, Saxon, Norman, English, Viking, French and other influences blended into what Scotland has since become. And through all the political maneuvering, wars and annexations, Scotland may not appear on any list as a separate country, but it lies in the hearts of many people across the world as the ONLY country.



King James I, of Scotland – Imprisoned at a young age by England, James lingered while his uncle Robert Stewart of Albany either didn't or couldn't pay the ransom.



<http://www.yesscotland.net>

MacLean of Duart & Irvine of Drum

by Albert Thomson

Harlaw is remembered in song, in verse and in stories handed down through the generations, often related by *Seneachie's* of the various clans.

One aspect of the battle has always fascinated me and that concerns the single combat between Sir Alexander Irvine of Drum and Red Hector of the Battles.

The description of the opposing sides and the battle itself is covered elsewhere, therefore I will concentrate on what Peter Marren (*Grampian Battlefields*) described as an epic duel between Sir Alexander Irvine and Red Hector MacLean by the end of which both lay dead:

That is about all that most accounts provide about this bloody episode of the battle.

My interest however, lay beyond that, to find out more about the two men involved.

I was fortunate however, to be present at the 600th Commemoration of the battle in 2011 when a member of Clan Maclean read the clan *Seneachie's* account while standing close to the place Red Hector's cairn once stood on the battlefield.

The account, recorded in 1838 is as follows:

In the midst of the carnage, the renowned chief of Maclean performed prodigies of valour, his massive sword, wielded by an arm of great strength, laid prostrate every foe it encountered.

In the after part of the day; while victory yet weighed the balance with an even hand for either side the Lord of Duart met an adversary worthy his sanguinary claymore, Sir Alexander Irvine of Drum, whose prowess he had often heard. They were guided towards one another by the armorial bearings on their shields."

"Ha! Chief of Duart, follower of a rebel vassal, have I at length the satisfaction to see thee within reach of my sword point?" exclaimed the knight of Drum.

"Time serving slave," replied Maclean,

"thou hast, if it be satisfaction to thee; and if my steel be as keen as my appetite for life of thine, thou shalt not have time to repeat thy taunt."

The result was not of long duration, for such was the fury, with which the heroic rivals fought, that they fell dead foot to foot on the field, ere a friend had time to assist either.

Thus fell Eachuinn Ruadh na 'n Cathh" in a way we may conclude the most congenial to such a spirit "with his back to the field and his feet to the foe."

Eachann Ruadh nan Cath or Red Hector of the Battles was the sixth Chief of Maclean.

His parents were Lachlan Lubanach Maclean who married Lady Margaret MacDonald the daughter of John, the first Lord of the Isles and received Duart, land grants and stewardship of the Lord's household. Mary's brother, Donald, was the next Lord of the Isles.

Hector was therefore the nephew of Donald, Lord of the Isles and was sent as a trusted envoy to London to liaise with King James who was held prisoner there.

Hector was also known as Hector Rufus Bellicosus and Hector Roy Maclean due to his fiery red hair.

Red Hector quickly distinguished himself through a series of daring exploits and was renowned as being one of the "best swordsmen of his time". His reputation was such that he faced many challenges from knights who came "from distant parts" to challenge him.

The best known instance of such a



MacDonald shield as it appears on the memorial commemorating the 1411 Battle of Reid Harlaw.

challenge relates to a knight from Norway who travelled to Mull to challenge Red Hector to mortal combat. The met “at Salen in Mull, where they fought, and where the Norwegian fell. A green mound and cairn on the sea-shore mark the spot where Hector had his antagonist buried”.

In his *History of Clan Maclean* (1889), JP Maclean refers to an old Gaelic poem which relates to Red Hector commanding a “great fleet to the coast of Ireland and there defeated some of the ships of the King of England”. According to the poem Hector landed in Ireland, and “carried fire and sword into the country; destroyed many of his enemies, and burnt their houses”.

It was suggested that this expedition is referred to in Hollingshed’s *Chronicles of Ireland* where in 1400 the Constable of Dublin and others at Stanford in Ulster “fought at sea with the Scots, where many Englishmen were slain and drowned”.

In 1409 Donald, the second Lord of the Isles gave a charter to Hector Maclean for “certain lands, and is there described as Lord of Duart and Constable of the castle of Carinburg” situated on a small island two miles from Mull.

For over a thousand years Cairnburg was used as a royal garrison and is said to have been built by one of the Norwegian Kings as a royal residence.

Hector married a daughter of the Earl of Douglas who made numerous overtures to try and induce Hector away from the influence of his uncle Donald, Lord of the Isles. Hector remained loyal to Donald as his hereditary Lieutenant General of the Isles serving at his right hand side at Harlaw.

He is often called the ‘campiductor’ of Donald’s army and he was given charge of the prestigious right wing at the Battle of Harlaw, the place of his destiny.

The body of Hector was carried from the field of battle upon the shields of men from the Clans MacInnes and McIlvurich (or McIlvory of Morven) and taken eventually to Iona where it was entombed.”

The traditions of his country speak much of him to the present day; many anecdotes nurtured by an affectionate feeling for his memory are yet of him; for it would appear that Hector Rufus of Duart was as good as he was brave.

Red Hector had two sons, Lachlan his successor and John Dubh.

Sir Alexander Irvine of Drum was the 3rd Laird of Drum who Douglas Wimberley describes as having accompanied his cousin, the Earl of Mar (Alexander Stewart) to Flanders where he joined the army of the Duke of Burgundy in 1409.

He was knighted on the morning of the Battle of Liege (See *A Short Account of the Family of Irvine of Drum* by Captain Douglas Wimberley -1893)

This may actually refer to the Battle of Othee near Liege which was a great victory for John the Fearless the Duke of Burgundy in 1408. The battle was the result of a disagreement between John of Bavaria, the Bishop of Liege and the citizens of Liege.

The Duke of Burgundy was an ally of John of Bavaria and marched to his assistance. The allies met up a short distance from Liege. The citizen army and allies marched out to meet them in similar circumstances to the events leading up to Harlaw less than three years later.

Sir Alexander returned to Scotland in 1410, probably accompanied by the Earl of Mar.

Irvine family tradition has it that there was a feud with the neighbouring Keith family, the Earls Marischal of Scotland, resulting in numerous acts of violence between the two.

On one occasion a skirmish had taken place between them at a place on the north bank of the River Dee where the Irvines were victorious.

The location is near the Park Bridge



Irvin of Drum shield as it appears on the memorial commemorating the 1411 Battle of Reid Harlaw.

that links the linking the North Deeside Road, at Drumoak with the South Deeside Road at Durris.

The skirmish followed a foray by the Keiths' on Drum lands but they were overtaken before they could secure their plunder.

The location was thereafter called "The Keiths' Muir" and those who escaped the sword were drowned in a deep stretch of the Rive Dee known as "The Keiths' Pot" where a point of rock projects from the water at some distance from the bank.

The rock was named "The Keiths' Stone" where it is said their leader on reaching the spot was safe from the arrows and spears of the Irvines'.

In response to the on-going feud, Albany, Regent of Scotland mediated and as part of the reconciliation between the two families, Sir Alexander married Elizabeth the daughter of Sir Robert Keith the Great Marischal of Scotland.

The marriage took place but it appears that the young Alexander retained some resentment against the Keiths and the marriage was never consummated.

In 1411 after being summoned to join the army of the Earl of Mar, Sir Alexander Irvine, rode from Drum with his younger brother Robert and his retainer towards Inverurie. On top of a hill at Auchronie, from where, tradition has it that they were still able to see the tower of Drum, the two brothers sat on a large rock.

As he feared the outcome of the battle to come, Sir Alexander is said to have told his brother that should he fall in the battle, Robert was to marry his wife Elizabeth.

In Sir Alexander we

have a renowned warrior experience in warfare at home and abroad. His request that his brother marry his wife also indicates that he was very aware of the possibility of dying at the battle and his last wishes also suggest that his first thought was towards his family name and the desire to ensure the feud with the Keiths' was settled.

After the death of Sir Alexander, Robert, duly married Elizabeth, and on his accession to Drum, changed his name to Alexander, which was the traditional Christian name of the Laird of Drum.

In the 1800's, the Irvine of Drum family, conscious of the tale of the Drum Stone, were able to locate the large rock, in a field on Auchronie Hill, above the Kirkton of Skene.

At Harlaw, there are some traditions (www.torbarandualchais.co.uk) that Sir Alexander killed seventeen men before meeting Red Hector of the Battles in mortal combat.

For many generations thereafter, the anniversary of the battle was respectfully "observed by the houses of Duard and Drum; and on such occasions an exchange of swords took place between the respective successors of Maclean and Irvine, as a token of respect to the memory of their brave ancestors, and as a bond of perpetual friendship between themselves".



On 24th July 2011, as a mark of respect and to honour the long lost tradition, Sir Lachlan Maclean and David Irvine of Drum once again exchanged swords on the sair field of Reid Harlaw.

The Celtic Aftermath

It is generally accepted that the 1411 Battle of Red Harlaw was fought as a result of a competition for the Ross Highlands of Scotland, and pitted the forces of Donald MacDonald, Lord of the Isle, against Aberdeen area forces fighting for the survival of their town, under the banner of a Stewart descendant, typically known as the Earl of Mar – a man who had also laid claim to Ross, partly sparking Donald's attack.

Though the battle seems to have been a military draw, the Earl claimed and effectively had the victory for at least the next few years to follow. The battle truly was a life or death situation for the combatants on each side, even beyond the battlefield.

In the case of the Aberdeen defenders, their industrious and vibrant town stood a chance of being plundered and destroyed. In the case of Donald, if he could not secure Ross, and it fell into the hands of the Stewarts of Albany, his island kingdom could be in jeopardy, and it is likely he would have had to retire to Ireland where his bother, John Mor MacDonald ruled a sizable chunk of Ulster.

John Mor and his brother Donald of Harlaw had experienced their own falling out not long before Harlaw, but had seemed to make amends. John was at his brother's side, at Harlaw.

John was well-loved in Ireland and managed to make allies out of just about every faction in Ulster – the native Irish, the transported Scots, the English king, and even the Anglo Irish. Between Donald and John the northern Irish Sea coastal regions were solidly meshed into one Gaelic kingdom led by Clan Donald. Donald's branch was later referred to as Clan Donald North, whereas John's clan in Ireland and on the Scottish island of Kintyre became known as Clan Donald South.

Adding to the confusion of the day, King James, the son of the deceased Robert III, had

been taken prisoner by the English, causing Robert's death from a broken heart. The Albany Stewarts, led by James's uncle, Robert Stewart, essentially ruled Scotland as the de facto royal family, refusing or unable to pay the ransom that would set James free. Donald had sent emissaries to visit both the English king and King James, and it is likely that he saw James's return to Scotland as a way to save his coastal kingdom and perhaps receive royal sanction for his claim to Ross, a sanction that was eventually offered not to him but to his son Alexander, after the death of Donald in 1423.

Donald's mother was the daughter of Robert II, a king who had complicated many land rights in Scotland by marrying off his several children to families of power throughout Scotland. His goal was to unify the country but, instead, he created unintended internal strife between many of his descendants, including Donald of Harlaw and Alexander Stewart who met him on the Harlaw battlefield – Donald's first cousin.

The year after Donald's death, King James was returned to Scotland. It didn't take him long to seek revenge on the Albany Stewarts putting at least the top three to death, with Alexander McDonald sitting on the jury along with 20 other knights of the realm.

With the power of Albany now history, King James assumed control of Ross, however Alexander began using the title Master of Ross. Apparently this didn't sit well with James as he invited Alexander to Inverness along with several of his top clan members and his mother. The group was promptly arrested though many were released shortly afterwards. However, Alexander and his mother were kept in separate prisons in James's attempt to quell problems in the Isles.

By 1428, Alexander was released on good behavior. This was due, in part, because of

the death of his uncle, John Mor MacDonald/McDonnell of Ulster and Clan Donald South. John had been supporting a grandson of Robert III, also named James, as the true king of Scotland, probably because of his nephew's imprisonment.

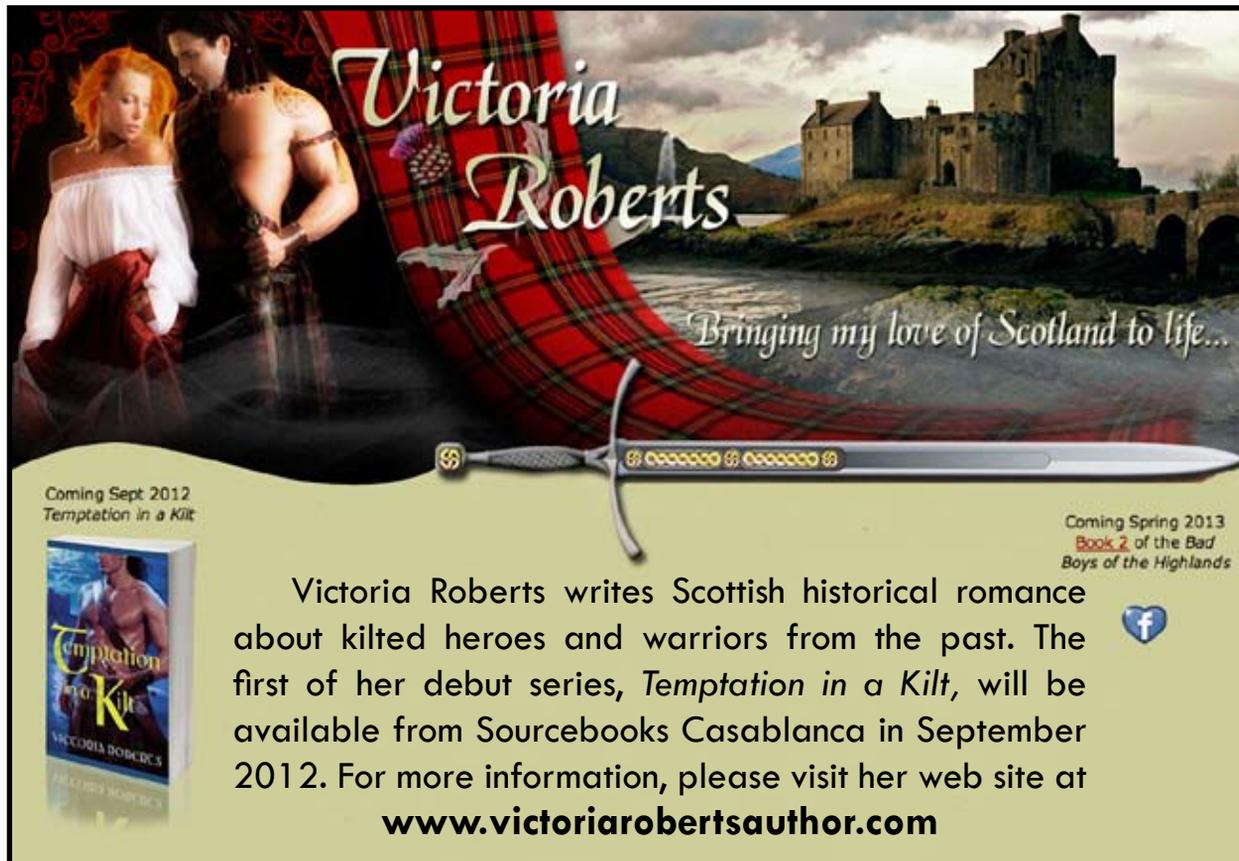
King James sent one James Campbell to treat with John Mor, along with an offer that if he swore allegiance to King James, the king would acknowledge him as Lord of the Isles, having been the brother of Donald, Lord of the Isles. John refused and Campbell tried to arrest him. A fierce battle ensued and John was killed.

Now the king's reputation was in serious trouble, having imprisoned Alexander and essentially having been responsible for John's death. These were the North and South leaders of Clan Donald, which was, at the time, the most widespread, most powerful clan in Scotland – a clan allied with many families along the coast and throughout the Highlands and even England.

King James had James Campbell tried and executed for murder, and he refused to accept any blame for the fiasco, releasing Alexander on a bond of good behavior. Alexander wasted little time. Gathering his forces and allies, he attacked and burned Inverness, the town where he had been taken prisoner, in the spring of 1429. He also swore allegiance to the younger James, the same man his uncle had supported.

However, as luck would have it, this younger James died an untimely death leaving Alexander exposed to the wrath of King James, with no strong leader in Ulster and Kintyre, and no alternate king to raise forces. King James sent a force to hunt down Alexander. The Lord of the Isles turned himself in, in August of that year. He is said to have pleaded for mercy in his underwear, with a sword pointed to his throat and the handle offered to King James.

Through the intercession of many nobles in Scotland, King James forgave Alexander's transgressions and once again released him.



Victoria Roberts writes Scottish historical romance about kilted heroes and warriors from the past. The first of her debut series, *Temptation in a Kilt*, will be available from Sourcebooks Casablanca in September 2012. For more information, please visit her web site at www.victoriarobertsauthor.com

Part of James's motive may have been that the son of John Mor, Donald Balloch, had managed to gain the support of nearly all the coastal clans to fight against James. The man sent to capture Alexander was the very same Earl of Mar who had stopped his father at Harlaw. However, the Earl was soundly defeated at the Battle of Inverlochy, by Donald Balloch leading many other clans, along with forces from Ireland.

The king could see the deck was stacked against him. Alexander was not only allowed to assume the title Earl of Ross, but was also made Justiciar of Scotland, essentially the top law enforcement officer in all of Scotland. As such, he appointed sheriffs and other law officers, and oversaw legal proceedings throughout Scotland. He reported only to the king, and next to the king he was arguably the most powerful man in all of Scotland.

With these recent developments in favor of Alexander, Clan Donald reached the zenith of its power. Meanwhile, King James had alienated so many nobles throughout Scotland with ruthless attacks, false arrests and executions, that a plot was set to assassinate him. In 1437, the plan was carried out and King James was found hiding in

a sewer pipe and summarily put to the sword.

Alexander had been living principally at Dingwall Castle and Inverness, rather than in the Isle, where his ancestors had ruled from.

Upon King James's death, Alexander became the most powerful man in all of Scotland, though he had lost support from some of his island kinsman. Eventually a new King James came to the throne. Alexander died in 1449, at Dingwall. He was followed by his son, John.

Lord John again faced the wrath of the crown and of other nobles to where he eventually gave up the title of Earl of Ross and retired to the Isles. His brother, Hugh of Sleat, became chief of the MacDonaldis of Sleat and from him the headship of Clan Donald North descended.

On Lord John's death, and with ever increasing incursions into the Highlands and islands by the new king, the once powerful Clan Donald was reduced to infighting amongst themselves, or with other local clans over the slim pickings that were left. Control of the clan shifted, for the most part, to Clan Donald South. Many clan members moved to Ireland to support their McDonnell cousins and were among the first people known to be referred to



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as the Scotch-Irish, undoubtedly a contraction of “Scottish-Irish,” in a manifesto issued by England’s Queen Elizabeth on April 14, 1573.

By 1498, the seat of the Bishop of the Isles was moved off the Isle of Skye and out of Clan Donald influence for the first time in roughly 1,000 years. The only northern leader, Hugh of Sleat, also died that year at Paisley Abbey. His brother had become not much more than a pauper and died in Dundee in 1502. The king sent for his body and belongings to have them properly buried. The struggles and power of Clan Donald moved its focus to Ireland, and to some degree to Kintyre. The Campbells slowly annexed much of the old realm of the Lord of the

Isles, as a reward for their service to the crown. The principally Lowland Stewart monarchy continued to rule Scotland and eventually James VI of Scotland became James I of the combined kingdoms of Scotland and England – otherwise known as Great Britain.

Red Harlaw, in many ways, was the beginning of the rise and eventual fall of the Lord of the Isles, and of the great island powerhouse of Celts and Vikings first brought together by the legendary Somerled. Today, Prince Charles, of England, holds the ceremonial title of Lord of the Isles. Sir Godfrey McDonald is Chief of Clan Donald and Sir Ian McDonald is Chief of Sleat, known in Gaelic as *Clan Uisdean*.

Celtic Warrior Pendant

Actual size: 1" x 1/8" diameter. This Shield of protection is a Celtic design based on the numbers 3 and 4, which enable magical powers to come into play that help provide circles of protection and other important esoteric forces to enhance well being. The central design in this work is a Quatrefoil composed of 4 circles interlocked into magical Celtic Knots. They represent the four corners of the Earth, the 4 winds, the 4 elements: earth, air, water, and fire. Most importantly these points represent the 4 angelic guardians. The quatrefoil is a symbol of good luck as in the 4-Leaf clover. One of several world symbols, this design is where the 4 realms of North, South, East, and west are joined and the 4 elemental angelic guardians bring protection to those who wear this amulet. Comes on an adjustable black cord.



Artzy Claddagh Shamrock Cake Topper

These tops measure approx. 4.25" wide x 4.25 - 5.25" High (depending on design) and are 3/8" thick acrylic. A clear acrylic plate is included, for extra support on cake surface (most will stand on their own). Afterwards, this top becomes a keepsake to remember your special day. Personalize with your names and date. We will engrave layout and font as shown.



Trinity Knot Cake Topper

Ceramic Trinity Knot Cake topper. Perfect for any wedding. Trinity is the symbol of the divine, but also the interlocking knot work symbolizes the unending union of love.



Kristin Olsen is the proprietor of the Celtic Attic web site, where you will find all types of Irish, Scottish and Viking imports. Kristin won't sell anything that she is not absolutely proud of. "I want happy customers, I want repeat customers, I want my customers to call me by my first name and have a smile part their lips when they think of Celtic Attic and the pride of the Celts & the Vikings!"

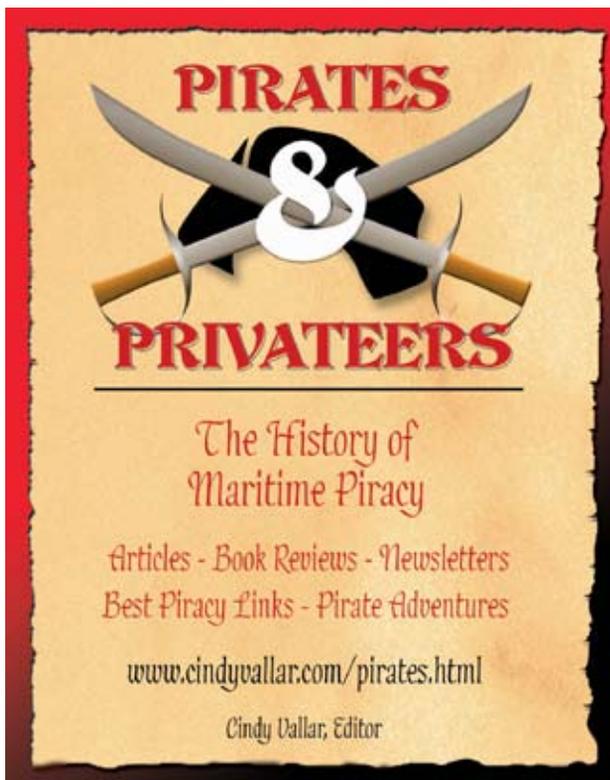
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So, what's next?

As you can see, we were pushed out to 36 pages again, just after I said we'd try to keep the digital file down to 24. Guess we'll just go with the flow of each issue, depending on the amount of submissions and interest in the subject.

This July issue has to be one of the more comprehensive views of the Battle of Red or Reid Harlaw to be presented just about anywhere. It contains old writings and new discoveries, plus vignettes from the day of the battle and a ton of background information from many experts. So much of this has come from modern analysis of ancient writings and that is the case for much of what is happening in the digital recording of these histories, and in new books or essays on what, combined, these writings can tell us. With this in mind, the August issue of Celtic Guide will explore ancient sources of information that have helped us see the bigger picture of Celtic culture as it spread from the Alps to Alba, from the Northern British Isles to North America, from New Scotland (Nova Scotia) to New Zealand, and beyond.

There are so many resources referred to time and again, interpreted in various ways, and, when compared with other contemporary documents, with historical timelines and with logic applied to motives or circumstances of the day, blend together into a tapestry of history which may be the best we can weave, for now, but, as we all know, may someday become even clearer. See you again in August!



In 1411, one of the most dramatic and important battles in Scottish history took place at Harlaw, just outside the City of Aberdeen. Hardly a Scottish family or clan cannot trace someone with their bloodline back to this battle. Now, you can be part of the effort to commemorate and preserve the history of this important day in Scottish history through the -
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