



# Celtic Guide

Volume 1, Issue 8 – August 2012

Keys to  
Celtic History





## *From the Editor*

Welcome to one valuable set of lessons in Celtic discovery, brought to you by a growing number of authors who care enough to spend their time writing articles for the Celtic Guide. We have reached an unprecedented 48 pages this issue. There are many magazines with multi-person staffs that have as many pages or less and yet we do this with our one-man layout artist (me), backed by so many great writers.

**And, it's all FREE to the reader!**

Often, when we talk about the history of the so-called "Celtic" race, it is not uncommon for many centuries to be lumped together. We all know from the recent history of our own countries, and of the modern world, that a lot can happen in only a few years; even one year can be history-making. Thus we speak in generalities until the specific example comes along. The tools we use to discover the generalities (and often even the specifics) include: recorded histories, genealogies, and maps; gatherings (from Highland games and Irish festivals to family get-togethers); archeology, at times using modern technology and aerial photography; data driven analysis or the comparison of ancient sources of data, often compared against newer, more accurately-measurable data; plus new techniques from DNA research to advanced methods of laser and MRI scanning of archeological finds.

The internet has made the sharing and comparing of information more powerful than ever. A family tradition can be compared to that of another family, or even to a military report, a set of church records, or an ancient historical work – now easily made available through Google book searches and other sources. Hundreds of thousands of websites have sprung up providing family histories, census data, military records, historical accounts – the list goes on. Wikipedia has certainly played a very substantial role, too, and is fairly well vetted by its very nature. Though an open mind and a grain of salt are often a necessity, each clue, no matter how small, helps weave our personal tapestry of family history.

It is our intention, with every issue of Celtic Guide, to present some type of sifted-down theme related to Celtic history in order to provide some good storytelling and some amount of comprehensiveness to the subject matter, knowing we can only barely touch on its complexity.

With this issue, specifically, we are attempting to display some of the sources and techniques that have helped us learn about our past, and also to tell of some specific examples where the above mentioned techniques have brought us new ideas about our heritage.

We are so lucky to have the authors that we have. In addition to our long list of those who have already contributed, we have been introduced to the online Ancient History Encyclopedia (<http://www.ancient.eu.com/>) and two of their writers, James Wiener and Joshua Mark, will join the ranks of Celtic Guide authors. We even have professional genealogist, Christine Woodcock, joining us with an unbelievably helpful guide to searching ancestors.

Cass and Deborah Wright's *Henceforth Tales*, this issue, involves the family of the great historian/poet Sir Walter Scott from whom much has been learned, plus Sharron Gunn returns with a very interesting analysis of the *Annals of Ulster*. Scott Woodburn, Ron Henderson and Albert Thomson are back, too!

Another great article has been provided by Debbie Kennett from Family Tree DNA. With Bennett Greenspan as its leader, this organization has been in the forefront in genetic analysis, comparing thousands of samples from participants from all over the world. Their charts and analysis of DNA has helped many people find their roots, in some cases in very dramatic ways.

Also, much to our surprise and enjoyment, we were treated to a Facebook page for the Celtic Guide, created by a volunteer, Carolyn Emerick, which has dramatically increased our readership and sources of further information and authorship.

A search for just about any simple aspect of Celtic life can turn up thousands of web sites. We are only one of many, and we have our own style – a magazine storytelling style – which seems to be well-received. Our sincere thanks to our readers, to our writers, to our volunteers and cheerleaders. You are invited to follow your Celtic Guide down new paths each month as we travel the historical trail of Celtic culture.

# Techno-geography 101

Forget your old high school and university textbooks. Geography has gone techno with some wild results. I've half-jokingly christened it techno-geography.

The ability to capture high resolution images of the Earth's surface has revealed some never before discovered features that have led to new archeological digs and new theories.

For instance, on the Isle of Skye a Viking shipbuilding area was recently discovered through aerial photography.

A few years ago, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) launched aerial surveys of the Isle of Skye, perhaps in part due to an accidental discovery of a Viking anchor, in 2009, by a Skye crofter.

Boat timbers, a stone-built quay, and a canal have already been uncovered at *Loch na h-Airde* on Skye's *Rubh an Dunain* peninsula, due to its outline showing up fairly clearly in aerial photos of that waterway. The loch was used extensively by Vikings and later by the MacAskill and MacLeod families.

Colin Martin, a marine archeologist involved in investigating the site, told the BBC, in May of 2011 that, in his opinion, "This site has enormous potential to tell us about how boats were built, serviced and sailed on Scotland's western seaboard in the medieval period - and perhaps during the early historic and prehistoric eras as well. There is no other site quite like this in Scotland." He further stated, "The aerial perspective gives us an excellent sense of this, showing the inter-relations of land and sea, and helping us to understand how people may have travelled, traded - and fought - on the waters around Scotland's western isles."

Another area of Skye that may hold promise is the western shoreline of the Trotternish peninsula. *Trotternish* is possibly a Viking word

for "trading bay." *Nish* or *niche* is a word thought by some to refer to an inlet or bay and *Trotter* is possibly the Norse version of "trader."

The European word *niche* originally referred to a recess, as in a wall designed to hold a statue, an urn, or some other decorative object. Later, it came to mean a natural hollow in a rock or a hill, and, by extension, any recessed area.

Loch Snizort creates a protective bay or niche along the west edge of Trotternish. In that bay is said to be an island where two Crusader knights are buried. It is interesting to note that the chapel of the Bishop of the Isles was located just below the end of Loch Snizort for an estimated 1,000 years before it was moved in 1498. This area would have seen much activity from Vikings to the MacDonald and MacLeod clans, to church authorities. Even before all this activity, there is evidence of standing stones dating back to the Picts – a great place for aerial photography!

This is the very bay Flora MacDonald entered when helping Bonnie Prince Charlie escape. She died in a small house that once belonged to the owner of *Caisteal Uisdean*, the youngest castle on Skye, which faces to the setting sun across the bay. The Martin family, who owns the farm just above the castle, has owned that farm for over 500 years!

There is another theory for the Trotternish name. The old Norse word *nes* means "headland" as does the Anglo-Saxon word *naes*. A headland is a point of land, usually high, and often with a sheer drop that extends out into a body of water. Certainly this describes Trotternish. The Trotternish Ridge is a 20-mile-long inland cliff winding down the centre of the peninsula.

The theory is that Trotternish comes from the Norse for "Thronð's Headland." Thronð was known as a trader in Norse sagas and so it is quite possible that during his vast trading travels he laid claim to the Trotternish headlands.

Scotland isn't alone in making good use of images from on high. In fact, the first known use of aerial archeology in Ireland took place way back in 1927 in Northern Ireland.

That first application of aerial archeology in Ireland was the 1927 initiative of the Ancient Monuments Board in Northern Ireland working with the RAF.

An even earlier aerial photo of the Hill of Tara, County Meath, was taken three years before by the Irish Army Air Corps, in 1924. The image to the right is that very photograph as held by the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland/Government Stationery Office.

Barry Raftery (16 August 1944 – 22 August 2010) was an Irish archeologist and Celtic scholar known for his work on the Iron Age in Ireland. He cited the first use of archeological air photography in the Republic of Ireland in 1934, and called for the “proper collaboration in surveying . . . archeological sites all over this country.”

J. Kenneth St. Joseph was the founder of the Cambridge University Committee for Air Photography (CUCAP). St. Joseph was one of the greatest exponents of deliberate archeological and other landscape air photography in Ireland as well as England, Wales and Scotland. He helped facilitate a large collection of aerial shots in excess of 11,000 photos.

Today, map making has taken a new digital twist. A handful of internet search engines provide maps, which when enlarged, show additional detail. Plus, there are programs that allow street views and satellite views of the surface of the Earth. One group of software geniuses has begun to use data to create web maps, not exclusively based on geography, but also on just about any type of data. Luckily, Ireland was chosen as a test for a map based on family names. The data was provided by the 1890 Irish census. The most often mentioned names are shown in larger type, while the less mentioned do not show until the map is zoomed in on, very similar to a web street map.



For a detailed report on aerial photography in Ireland see - [http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Publications/Archaeology/Aerial\\_Archaeology.pdf](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Archaeology/Aerial_Archaeology.pdf)

Additional features were later added that allowed for short blurbs about each family name, making the map interactive. Plus a search tool for a specific name was added.

The website for this unique map of Ireland can be found at - <http://www.esri-ireland.ie/maps-on-line/interactive-maps/DiscoveryourIrishnameorigins.aspx>

The amount of data being made available through aerial and satellite photography and through digital mapping techniques is greatly expanding our understanding of the ancient world of the Celt.



*The ERSI name map of Ireland.*



# Church Records

*By Scott Woodburn*

The late American singer/songwriter Jim Croce once sang “I got a name and I carry it with me like my daddy did.” For many Irish Presbyterians we can sing along with Mr. Croce as our names and our daddy’s names have always played a huge part in our identity. For example when someone asks you in Northern Ireland “where do you belong?” oftentimes they are enquiring as to which church denomination you are connected with.

“Belonging” still holds tremendous resonance with many in our country with even the most tremendously non-committed church member still wanting to hold on to that connection with their local church – they may never attend but they still want to belong! The church I minister in is called Edengrove and we are situated in the small County Down town of Ballynahinch. It is possible to chart our history back to 1774 and many members of our church can chart family connections back to that time too. For Irish Presbyterians the concept of “belonging” to a group or larger family has been important since the arrival of Presbyterianism in Ireland back in 1642.

There are many reasons for this particular characteristic of Presbyterianism, but perhaps our theology speaks best to this issue. We have always maintained the notion of a promise making and promise keeping God. We chart these promises or “covenants” throughout the Bible and particularly Genesis chapter 17 where God promises Abram “I will be your God and you will be my people.”

Presbyterians still speak today with this language declaring our Sunday services to be a gathering of the “covenant community”

and baptisms to be a “sign of the covenant.” As a result of this theological makeup we have always taken seriously the task of recording the history of our own “covenant family”. It is no exaggeration to say that every Presbyterian Church in Ireland is fastidious about their church records and each congregation will maintain a record of baptisms, marriages and funerals in addition to copious amounts of minutes from church meetings. Within the Presbyterian Church it is possible to discover when your great grandmother was baptised, when your father’s father was ordained as an elder and even who voted for and against a contentious decision back in 1847 – each congregation is literally a localised public records office.

Sadly in Edengrove our records only travel back to mid-1800. We are convinced that the records from the early 1800’s are somewhere in a loft or basement waiting to be “rediscovered”.

We are also confident that our very earliest records were destroyed by the British during the Battle of Ballynahinch in 1798 during which our original Communion silverware also disappeared (perhaps this too awaits “rediscovery” in an Englishman’s loft!).



*Above: The painting “Battle of Ballynahinch” by Thomas Robinson. The battle took place June 12, 1798, and many local church records were destroyed.*

Despite these setbacks our records today offer a fascinating insight into the life and history of our church and town. The baptismal records show that Ballynahinch was once a decidedly rural town with most parents of baptised children involved in agriculture to some degree. Today the town has grown with the world around it and the baptismal records have a more “cosmopolitan” feel to them with parents described as computer programmers and public relations advisors. Our records show too that in the 1800’s and early 1900’s it was not uncommon for families to have as many as ten or more children while today most families are more than happy with two.

Records are not just confined to paper, it is the norm for Irish churches to have their own graveyard attached to the church building and the dates, names and addresses that gravestones provide are often invaluable to the keen genealogist. As Presbyterians we are a peculiar people in many ways and our records betray this fact. We declare as a church that we have no bishops, that the minister is an elder among elders and that we are a priesthood of all believers but despite these bold assertions many congregations have sought to pay tribute to the ministers who have worked in the church.

In Edengrove we have two marble tablets dedicated to the memory of the Rev. David Edgar who ministered from 1830 to 1880 and the Rev. Robert George Milling who ministered from 1880 to 1911. Other congregations have gone even further with tablets commemorating every minister who has ever served in the particular church. Ministers are not just remembered in marble but some have even passed their own names down through the congregation.

At a recent funeral a lady was sharing with me the history of her family revealing that her grandfather had no less than five names. I wondered aloud if these were all family names only to be told that when the minister had come to baptise the boy he was

displeased that the child would only have two names. He thought it much better that the new born boy also receive the minister’s name, the minister’s father’s name and also the minister’s grandfather’s name too! Jim Croce would be pleased!

This year will also witness the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant a document signed by almost half a million men and women pledging opposition to “Home Rule” on the 28th September 1912. This document is searchable online and as an Irish Presbyterian it is notable for me to witness that in 1798 a great many Irish Presbyterians found themselves on the side of the United Irishmen fighting to remove British influence from Ireland.

Just over 100 years later, however, many Presbyterians were now firmly on the side of the British Empire and by signing the Covenant rejected any notion of an independent self ruling Ireland. It is astonishing to search the online record and to see the physical signatures of relatives and well known historical figures literally “putting their name” to this political document. Some took this act so seriously that they actually signed the Covenant in their own blood.



*Sir Edward Carson, leader of the Irish Unionist Party, is shown putting his name first to the Solemn League and Covenant.*

The Home Rule crisis threatened to spill into a bloody civil war but this danger was trumped by an even bloodier conflict with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. This conflict and others since have caused Irish Presbyterians to maintain records of a different nature. A visit to any local congregation will uncover several wall mounted marble tablets highlighting the names of those who fought and sadly those who died in both the First and Second World Wars. These tablets serve as a daily reminder of the bravery of members of our “covenant family”.

With this depth of information it is not unusual for us to be contacted each year by Americans, Canadians and Australians who are trying to figure out exactly where they came from. Usually we are able to help. If you are planning a similar trip a letter or call in advance to the church in question is usually enough to guarantee access to the

records and a tour around the graveyard. Be aware however that some churches require a fee to look at the records and others may refuse completely or insist upon supervision – we are a small country but attitudes vary across the land! Another useful resource is the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) whose offices are worth a visit and whose website as mentioned allows you to search the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and other documents.

In today’s world we are increasingly encouraged to live, think and act as individuals with an “everyman for himself” attitude. I’m glad that in the Irish Presbyterian Church as we stare into tomorrow we remember and respect those who have gone before. I’ve heard it said that if you don’t know where you’ve been then you can’t know where you are going...to this Irish Presbyterians would say a hearty amen!

**Editor’s Note:** Scott Woodburn’s tale shows just how serious the role of churches, Presbyterian or otherwise, has been in preserving family records. Scott doesn’t mention that he came to the Ballynahinch church from his home church - the McQuiston Church of southern Belfast. This church once set the record for attendance of all Presbyterian churches in the history of Ireland, when its Sunday School class, alone, reached over 1600 children! The editor visited the church a few years back and was gifted with an original brick from the church, taken from an area where reconstruction was underway.

Of course Ballynahinch and McQuiston churches are only two examples of the many churches across the world that do their best to retain family records and keep cemeteries in good shape. Another very good example is the Scrubgrass Stone Church, located about halfway between Pittsburgh and Erie, PA. In 1803, this church was a frontier log church; the current structure was built in 1845. I have personally met and worked with the church historian, Sara McNany, and the amount of family information available at this one church is mind-boggling.

Slowly, church records are being digitally recorded and compared as one way to track immigration patterns, marriages, burials, land records, etc. The data of the old and ancient is being digitized and analyzed to provide new clues to thousands of seekers of family history, burials, and migrations.



*Scrubgrass Stone Church, Scrubgrass, PA*



# ISLAND LIVING

*by Ron Henderson*



In the little community of Bosta on the island of Greater Bernera, just off Lewis, people had known for years that there was something under the sands of Bosta beach. Bits of combs and bowls, etc., had been turning up on the odd occasion. It wasn't until a huge storm in the early 1990s uncovered some prehistoric dwellings that the reason was shown. There had been a community here at one time.

The archaeologists got to work and found several Viking houses. But when they excavated further they were surprised to discover that the Viking houses had been built right on top of even older Pictish houses. These houses were made in a figure of eight form, with the main room being the one nearest the door and the other room being at the back. Similar to a 'But and Ben' in Scotland but with a narrow 'waist' like the shape of a wasp. You can still see But and Ben ruins dotted all over the country.

There were no windows in the Pictish/Viking house and the smoke just went through the small hole in the thatch.

The custodian of the building who is a native of Greater Bernera and is a fluent Gaelic speaker, told us that in the years that she had been looking after the place she had never experienced rain entering. It seems that the heat rising from the peat fire directly below causes the rain to be diverted – even in the heaviest of rainfall, she assured us.

A replica house was built on a piece of clear land after the archaeologists had finished their work and the excavated houses were reburied leaving the top of the walls exposed to a depth of one foot. A subsequent storm completely covered these buildings with sand and there is no sign of them now.

In the photo above you get the impression that what you are seeing are the walls of the house. In fact that is only a windshield. The actual dwelling is around four or five feet below that, under the ground. The walls were constructed with a cavity between them that was filled with dried peat and sand – cavity wall insulation from over 1,000 years ago!



The chamber at the back is dug even further into the ground with the floor level around one and a half feet lower so that it remains colder than the main room at the front, where the fire is. This was where the occupants stored their perishable foodstuffs.

It is believed that in the roof space they would have hung fish and fowl so that they would be dried and smoked from the peat fire.

When you enter the Picts house you go into what appears to be impenetrable darkness, but after a moment or so your eyes become accustomed to the stygian blackness and you can make out the pots, ladder, shelves and the long bench that sat on one side of the room. These long benches were still being used in Highland black houses up until the 1950's. I've sat on one and they're really comfortable.

Lower left: A peat fire towards the center of the main room sent smoke out a hole in the top of the dwelling without letting any rain in.

At right: This photo, with the little light showing from a wee oil lamp (a *cruse* or *cruise*; from Gaelic: *cruisgean* or Norse: *krus*), was taken in the back room and you can make out two people leaving the building via the front door.

And that, folks, is how our ancestors lived.



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Based on drawings and observations made in 1883, these dwellings are very, very similar to those of the Han First Nations who lived around Fort Reliance, six miles out of Dawson, Yukon – the headquarters of the Scotch-Irish Father of the Yukon. Whether influenced by Vikings or Celts, or simply a common building style of ancient people, the similarity is quite amazing.

# Clava Cairns

by Joshua J. Mark

Over 4,000 years ago our ancestors raised huge megaliths and positioned them in the earth with care. Sites such as The Ring of Brodgar in Stenness, Orkney, or the famous Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England, mystify and enchant visitors from around the world today. There are many other more modest sites, however, which reward a visitor's time and effort just as much as these more famous places and, perhaps, more so. Five miles east of the city of Inverness, Scotland, just down from Culloden Moor, rests one such site: the Balnuaran of Clava - popularly known as Clava Cairns.

Dating from the late Neolithic period, Clava Cairns consists of three well-preserved cairns and a number of free-standing stones strategically placed for astronomical purposes. There is no doubt among the scholarly community that the site was used both as a burial ground and as some sort of celestial marker. According to Andis Kaulins of Megaliths.net, *Bal* meant Pole and *Nuaran*, River of Light, thus designating Balnuaran as the center of the heavens from which the ancients could chart the stars.

**EDITOR NOTE:** Joshua Mark is a Director and Editor for the fantastic online *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. We are very happy to have him aboard with this story on an archeological find in Scotland. James Wiener, fellow author and News Editor for the Encyclopedia, will most likely join us with an article in the September issue of Celtic Guide. Thanks, Josh and James!

## An Intimate Visit With The Past

There are forty-five other cairns in the Inverness-Nairn valley which form a definite pattern corresponding to the planets (among them the very impressive Corrimony Cairn near Cannich). Of these many cairns, the Balnuaran of Clava are unique in that they are both very well preserved and easily accessible. Unlike Corrimony Cairn, which has the vaulted roof passageway intact and so necessitates almost crawling to get inside, two of the cairns at Clava have open passages one may easily walk down to the center.

Among the many fascinating aspects of Clava Cairns are the stones with the ring and cup marks. Examples of the mysterious circles carved in stones have been found all over the United Kingdom and beyond. No one knows what the circles symbolized to the ancient carvers but it appears the petroglyphs were wrought using stone tools or deer antlers. The north-east passage grave, extensively excavated by Professor R. Bradley in the 1990's along with the rest of the site, has most impressive ring and cup marks but whether these were carved into the stone before it was in situ (in position) or after is unknown.



Professor Bradley concluded that the entire site was constructed "during a single phase" but this only means that the stones and the cairns were erected at once and sheds no light on whether



the ring and cup marks were a part of the rituals which may have been observed there.

Digs at the site have revealed bone fragments indicating that this site, like others, was also a burial ground. Bradley reports that, “A few flecks of cremated bone were found on the surface of the platform” of the north-east Cairn and, further, that “over a hundred lithic artifacts were recovered during the excavation and samples were taken for study by soil micromorphology, pollen analysis and radiocarbon dating” (Bradley, Historic Environment Record).

It appears, however, that it served as a final resting place for a very select few and was not a cemetery for the common people. No complete skeletal remains have been recovered from the site and it is probable that only one person was buried in each of the cairns or, perhaps, only a single person at the entire site.

It has been speculated, based on the amount of quartz found in proximity to the cairns, that they were once adorned with the white stone which would have caused them to almost glow and this suggests the importance of the site to ancient people. Professor Bradley has shown that stone rubble was used to initially help hold the larger stones of the cairns in place and that this rubble then extended outwards toward the eleven monoliths which surround the site.

These smaller rocks and gravel, after the stones of the cairns were fully situated, were then spread to form an even platform between the three cairns and the monoliths so that, taken together with the quartz-covered cairns, the site would have been most impressive.

Professor Alexander Thom conclusively showed, in the 1940’s, that the entranceways into two of the cairns align directly and, in



*Josh Mark, author and Online Editor of the Ancient History Encyclopedia, stands in the center of the Clava Cairns, located just outside Inverness, Scotland, and dating back perhaps 4,000 years.*

correspondence with the standing stones, point to the mid-winter sun's setting position. The cairns are now all open to the sky but evidence suggests that they were once much higher than the ruins one sees today and that the inner chamber of each cairn was enclosed by a roof.

On the winter solstice, sunlight beams directly into the chamber of one of the cairns at Clava, illuminating the room which would have been in darkness the rest of the year. The three cairns are situated so precisely that, when considered in a pattern with other sites nearby, an astronomical purpose is very clearly suggested.

Excavations began at the site in 1828 and, since then, Clava Cairns has continued to interest archaeologists, historians, and tourists equally. The quiet cairns, situated in a clearing and ringed by trees, whisper a story from the past one feels more than hears.

The Nairn river flowing nearby, and the stillness of the site, invite contemplation of the similarities between one's life and the lives of those who raised the stones and built the cairns; though what those similarities are each visitor must learn individually.

Unlike the larger sites of Stonehenge and Brodgar, Clava Cairns provides a more intimate visit with the past; and it is well worth taking the time to listen to the story the stones have to tell.

Hours: Open year round.

Handicapped Accessible: Yes.

Toilets: No.

Restaurant: No.

Tours available: No. But there are informational boards which give brief descriptions of the site and propose interpretations.

Parking: Yes. Shopping: No.



*Clava Standing Stones*

#### **For Further Reading/References:**

1. <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/inverness/clavacairns/>
2. <http://www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk/scotland/invernesshire/featured-sites/balnuaran-of-clava.html>
3. <http://www.megaliths.net/>
4. <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/drumnadrochit/corrimony/index.html>
5. <http://her.highland.gov.uk/SingleResult.aspx?uid='MHG3013'>
6. *Personal visit to the site and surrounding areas in April 2011.*



# Black Book of Paisley

by James A. McQuiston

Late in the year 1559, Presbyterian followers of John Knox began appropriating various Jacobite strongholds in Scotland. In a letter to William Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's Secretary of State, it was revealed that "the Lords had suppressed the Abbeys of Paisley, Kilwinning and Dunfermling, and burned all the images, idols and popish stuff." One relic, however, was spirited out of Paisley Abbey by Jacobite sympathizers and made its way safely into the hands of William Sinclair, of Rosslyn Chapel. The treasure he received is known as the *Black Book of Paisley*.

Sinclair had been appointed Lord Justice General of Scotland by Queen Mary, also in 1559, and was a man of great literary and antiquarian tastes. Scottish historian, Father Richard Hay (1661 - c.1736), tells us that Sinclair had "gathered a great many manuscripts which had been taken, by the rabble, out of our Monasteries in the time of the Reformation." Another Scottish historian, Thomas Dempster (1579 - 1625), writes that the Paisley book was, "snatched as a Palladium from the Knoxian flames." *The Black Book of Paisley* found safe haven in Sinclair's library for the next several years.

What could be the importance of this book that it so narrowly survived this and other close calls during its over five hundred years of existence, and what is the significance of Paisley Abbey? In this article, I will attempt to sort out these complex questions and answers.

Throughout history, certain objects developed mysterious legends - legends that sometimes lasted for centuries, like the Holy

Grail or the Dead Sea Scrolls. The *Black Book of Paisley* is one such object. Currently in the hands of the British Library, the book belies its name as it was rebound many years ago in the color red. Emblazoned on the front cover are the words "SCOTI CHRONICON PER JOHAN DE FORDUN ET WALTER BOWER. BLACK BOOK OF PAISLEY." Translated, this reads "*Scotland Chronicles by John of Fordun and Walter Bower. Black Book of Paisley.*"

The ancient history of Scotland was collected by these two men, John Fordun and Walter Bower (sometimes given as Bowmaker). The combined writings of these two historians is typically considered the *Scotichronicon* "proper" - or the original *Scotichronicon*. Transcriptions of these chronicles, made in successive years, are sometimes collectively considered as part of the "greater" *Scotichronicon* - perhaps the most important medieval account of Scottish history in existence.

The *Black Book of Paisley* is one such set of transcriptions of the *Scotichronicon*, and it is not to be confused with the original work. However, the *Black Book of Paisley* does appear to be the earliest transcription made of the writings of Fordun and Bower.

By the time Fordun began his project, many of Scotland's chronicles had been destroyed due to English invasions. In order to rebuild this history, Fordun visited monasteries throughout Great Britain and Ireland to recreate his country's early history, collecting this information during the latter half of the 14th century.

Fordun relied on two distinguished men for assistance. One was John Barbour who

wrote the 13,000-line epic poem “The Bruce.” Barbour’s work, while containing some poetic license, did recount much of the missing history of Scotland, especially that which surrounded Robert the Bruce.

Barbour studied at Oxford and was Archdeacon of Aberdeen during the same period that Fordun was a priest and chaplain, there. The other historian aiding Fordun was Walter Wadlow, Bishop of Glasgow, a legate appointed by the pope, as well as the Scottish ambassador to England appointed by Scotland’s king. Wadlow provided detailed genealogy of Scottish royalty, as well as other vital information.

Fordun probably completed his work by 1387. Both he and Wadlow are said to have died in that year, although there is some evidence that Fordun was alive as late as 1395. In his portion of the *Scotichronicon*, Fordun carried the line of Scottish royalty down to the death of David I, in 1153.

About 1441, Walter Bower, at the urging of Sir David Stewart of Rosssyth, began transcribing Fordun’s five books of Scottish history and added eleven more for a total of sixteen books that make up the original *Scotichronicon*. These sixteen “books” were typically reproduced in a single large volume, as in the case with the *Black Book of Paisley* - the first-known transcription of the original *Scotichronicon*.

Bower was born in 1385, just barely within the lifetime of Fordun. He became Abbot of Inchcolm and also a tax collector under James I.

He completed his portion of the *Scotichronicon* by about 1447, but perhaps as late as 1449, carrying the Scottish royal house down to James II.

The *Scotichronicon* proper was then, over the next several years, transcribed into a small number of manuscripts, the oldest or earliest being the Paisley book dating from about 1451 to 1452. While the monks at Paisley Abbey were given the honor of using the actual writings of Fordun and Bower to create their volume, at least some other versions to follow were copied from the Paisley book.

Other known versions of the *Scotichronicon* are the Brechin Castle manuscript from 1480, the Schevez manuscript from 1484, the Edinburgh College manuscript from 1510, and the Donibristle manuscript, also from about 1510. Most of these present the same information but in varying order, or are sometimes only condensed abridgments.

The Paisley book was recopied with a minor abridgment in 1501. This work, the abridgment of 1501, was then known as the *Niger Liber Pastleti* and it is this volume that is now in the British Library, and which is considered the official *Black Book of Paisley*. What became of the original transcription is unknown. The original Paisley book was considered the



*The oldest known transcription of the Declaration of Arbroath as it appears in the Black Book of Paisley.*



earliest full transcription of the *Scotichronicon*. Approximately two-hundred and seventy-one pages in length, the surviving Paisley volume is handwritten, for the most part in Latin, by a fifteenth-century hand, and features black text with the paragraphs beginning with a drop cap, alternating between blue type and red type.

The 1484 Schevez manuscript, a separate transcription of the *Scotichronicon*, is also in the hands of the British Library and is sometimes referred to as the Harleian manuscript.

The 1510 Edinburgh College manuscript is thought to have been the volume otherwise known as the *Book of Scone*.

Another version, known as the *Book of Cupar*, was a condensed abridgment also created by Walter Bower, during the last two years of his life, and is currently preserved by the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Another is the *Book of Perth*, likely an abridgment created by Patrick Russell, a monk from the Carthusian Order, of Perth. It is also held by the Advocates' Library, along with an abridgment by an unknown writer.

A final transcribed copy is held in the library of Corpus Christi College, in Cambridge, England.

Many of these later copies - the *Book of Cupar*, *Book of Scone* and *Book of Perth* - were nearly exact copies of earlier works, while the Brechin Castle, Schevez, and Donibristle manuscripts varied somewhat in format compared to the *Black Book of Paisley*. Still, all present a substantial amount, if not all of the original *Scotichronicon* text.

Our best understanding of the various transcriptions of the *Scotichronicon* follows:

1) Original *Scotichronicon* - finished 1447-49, whereabouts unknown;

2) First Paisley transcription - from 1451-52, whereabouts unknown;

3) Recopied *Black Book of Paisley* - from 1501, in British Library;

4) Schevez manuscript (or the Harleian manuscript) - 1484, also in British Library;

5) Edinburgh College manuscript (possibly referred to as *Book of Scone*) - 1510;

6) *Book of Cupar* (Bower's abridgment) 1447-49, Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, Scotland;

7) *Book of Perth*, also at Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, Scotland;

8) Additional abridged transcription by an unknown writer, also at Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, Scotland;

9) Additional transcription held by Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, England.

Many ancient authors, including Sir George Mackenzie, Patrick Fraser Tytler, and David Murray, contend that the original book of Paisley was the earliest in this type of reproduction of the *Scotichronicon*. This is proven, to some degree, in that the majority of the other books carry the succession of the royal house of Scotland, and of the Roman popes, beyond the Paisley book, indicating later creation dates. Also, there are mentions of specific plagues in Scotland that help establish the dating of the Paisley book.

David Murray published an extensive account of the Paisley book in 1885. Earlier in that century, Patrick Tytler produced his *History of Scotland*, and several articles for "Blackwood's Magazine", in which he mentions the same book. George Mackenzie was best known for his *Defense of the Royal Line of Scotland*, written in 1685 and *The Antiquity of the Royal Line of Scotland Further Defended*, from 1686, in which he also mentions the black book.

There is little argument that the original Paisley manuscript was the earliest transcription of the *Scotichronicon*, however it was not without its controversy in other areas. The *Black Book* contains one of the earliest reproductions of the Declaration of Arbroath - the Scottish declaration of independence. It also contains the lineage of the royal house and has been drawn into the arguments over the veracity of that genealogy. Fordun repeated what he had heard, concerning the history of the Scottish throne, from Bishop Wadlow of Glasgow. Bower built

on that lineage. Later, the line of descent repeated in the *Black Book* - and the very existence of the book, itself - came under intense scrutiny.

In addition to the genealogy of Scotland's early kings, and the reproduction of the Arbroath declaration, the work also includes a list of early Scottish historians and many other early records, including virtually all the writings of John Fordun. Bower attempted to delineate between Fordun's writings and his own, with various notes, although there are some areas where the authorship is in question. In addition, there are lists entitled "Fratres Jacobite", "Comitatus Scocie", and "Ducatus Scocie" - the first, a list of Jacobite brethren or religious leaders, the second, a list of military leaders, and the third, a list of government leaders.

The Paisley manuscript also contains prophecies, records of legal cases and stories of battles such as the Battle of Homildon Hill. There are reproductions of older writings like Prester John's famous letter to the Greek emperor. There are many other records, along with a few notes added by later owners of the *Black Book of Paisley*, including the Sinclair family.

But why should Paisley Abbey be given such an honor to be the home of the first transcription of this valuable record of Scottish history?

Paisley Abbey was created in 1163 when Walter Fitzalan, the High Steward of Scotland, signed a charter for the founding of a Cluniac monastery on land he owned in Renfrewshire, approximately seven miles from Glasgow.

Thirteen monks set up the priory on the site of an old Celtic church. The abbey charter was signed by several knights whose families came to Scotland with William the Conqueror. Many a Scottish name has links back to the charter of Paisley Abbey, during a time when surnames were first beginning to be used in Scotland.

The Glasgow Airport is located very nearby, just to the east of Paisley, and it was here, at the airport's current location, that Somerled, one of the great Gaelic heroes, was killed in battle, in

1164. His family, which became Clan Donald, also joined in issuing charters to the abbey in repayment for the burial of Somerled by the monks of Paisley. Somerled is said to be buried at Saddell Abbey near the Mull of Kintyre. The MacDonald family supported Paisley Abbey for centuries to come, and some of its old chiefs retired there, peacefully, as monks, escaping the cold of the north and the blood of the battlefields.

Hugh of Sleat, chief of Clan Donald North, died at the abbey, in 1498, although he was buried on the island of North Uist. This was the same year that a major fire destroyed the main buildings of Paisley Abbey, which were later rebuilt. Hugh's brother, John, last Lord of the Isles, died a few years later at Dundee and his body was brought to the abbey for burial.

From the beginning of Clan Donald and the death of Somerled, in 1164, until the end of the Lordship of the Isles dynasty, and the death of Hugh and John Macdonald (three and one half centuries later), Clan Donald was intimately and financially involved with the abbey, despite it being in the possession of other families.

Paisley Abbey was first under the control of the Stewart family, and later, of the Hamilton family. It has played a very substantial role in Scottish history. The sixth High Steward, Walter, married Marjory Bruce, the daughter of the famous Scottish king Robert the Bruce, in 1315. In the following year, Marjory died at the abbey following a tragic riding accident nearby, but the baby in her womb was saved and he became King Robert II of Scotland, the very first of the Stewart monarchs. For that reason, the abbey claims to be the "cradle of the Royal House of Stewart." The Paisley book speaks extensively of the marriage of Robert II to Elizabeth More. Robert II is often said to be buried at Paisley Abbey but was actually interred at Scone. However, Robert III was buried at the abbey.

Perhaps because of its significance to Scottish history and to the royal family, Paisley Abbey was chosen as the site for the first transcription



of the *Scotichronicon*. The current Paisley cathedral is a replacement and/or addition to earlier buildings, which were burned or had deteriorated. It was the attack on the abbey by adherents of John Knox that led to the *Black Book of Paisley* being spirited out of the abbey and, in part, to it becoming the legend that it has.

In a few ancient manuscripts there are mentions of the *Black Book of Paisley* being in the hands of William Sinclair. In the year of Sinclair's passing, 1574, the Paisley book became the subject of a legal case between Claud Hamilton, the nephew of John Hamilton, the last abbot of Paisley, and Lord Semphill.

Semphill had taken over Paisley Abbey

after Claud's estates were forfeited due to his support of Mary, Queen of Scots. In 1573, it was declared by Parliament that Claud should be reinstated in the abbey and its land holdings. However, Semphill refused to accept the judgment and was forced to yield only after the abbey was besieged by the Earl of Argyle. Hamilton then presented his legal case, stating that Semphill still had in his hands the seal of the abbey and the "buke callit the *blak buik of Paisley*", declining to return them to Hamilton.

There is some speculation that what Hamilton really wanted were rental and register records, rather than the rare historical volume.

Regardless, after he abdicated his position at Paisley, Sir James Semphill, in welcoming King



The author at Paisley Abbey. The town of Paisley is the source for the name of the well-known "Paisley" material pattern. Though the design was of Middle Eastern origin, the canny Scots of Paisley adjusted their looms to include many more colors in the pattern, thus being honored with the design being named for their town.

James back to his native soil, after a fourteen year absence, stated, "I swear by the *Black Book of Paisley* your Majesty is most dearlie welcome." How odd that he chose this book rather than the Bible, unless it was held in great esteem by both Semphill and the king.

The Archbishop of Spotswood was married to William Sinclair's daughter. Spotswood, in preparing to write his book, *History of the Church of Scotland*, wrote his father-in-law asking permission to use the Paisley manuscript.

The Archbishop apparently received the book "from Holyrood" - the Scottish royal palace - possibly from Lord Whitehall, Lord of Session.

That Spotswood had the book when writing his history of the church is not argued. Father Richard Hay writes that he found the book in the catalogue of Spotswood's library after he died. Others, including Spotswood's grandson, agree. The book may have then been taken back to the abbey at Holyrood, and escaped destruction once again, when that structure was burned November 13, 1650.

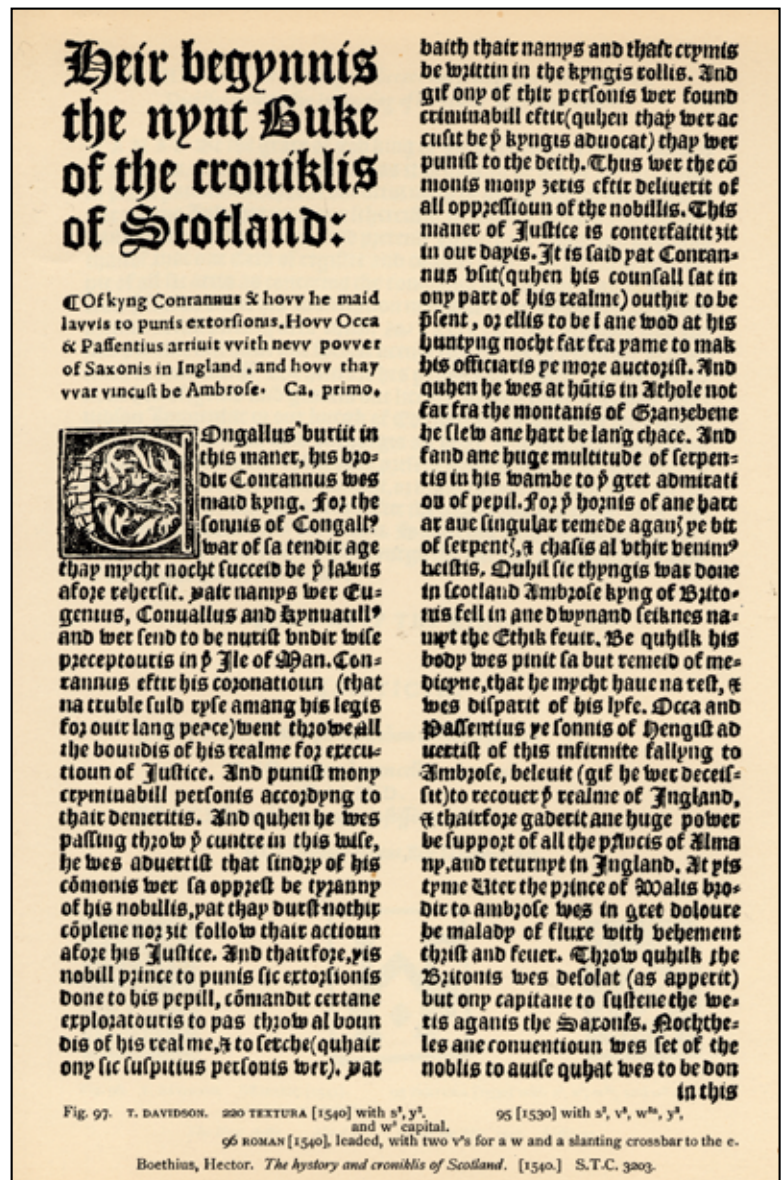
At some point the *Black Book of Paisley* came into the possession of General Lambert who took it to England and presented it to Lord Fairfax, the Parliamentary General. Though a Presbyterian, Fairfax was an antiquarian, and a lover and collector of curious manuscripts. Fairfax also received, about this same time, a copy of Wynton's *Chronicles*, which had also been a part of Sinclair's library.

Fairfax either gave the *Black Book of Paisley* to Charles II, or sold it to him for 100 British pounds as some reports indicate. Charles added it to the Royal Library at St. James'. It was then that the book became

the subject of a violent literary controversy involving the genealogy of the Scottish kings.

While in the possession of Charles II, the *Black Book* was recovered in its present red morocco binding. The manuscript, along with Charles' vast collection, was given to the British Museum, by King George II, in 1759.

Today, this magnificent old tome, the *Black Book of Paisley*, has found a resting place at the British Library, to await its next great adventure.



From the editor's private library, here is a copy of a page from an early printed version of the chronicles from 1540, entitled "Here begins the ninth book of the chronicles of Scotland."



# Henceforth Tales

by Cass & Deborah Wright

## Scott

In the mid 10th century, two brothers from Galloway, banished for riot and insurrection, came to Rankleburn, in Ettrick Forest, where the keeper, named Brydone, took them in gladly, knowing their art in winding the horn and other skills of the chase.

Kenneth MacAlpin, the first Great King of Scotland, came soon after to hunt in the royal forest, and pursued a stag to the glen now called Buccleuch, two miles above where Rankleburn joins the river Ettrick. There the buck stood at bay; the Royal party, mounted for the chase, were halted by the grade of the deep morass.

John, one of the Galloway brothers who had followed on foot, raced onward to circle behind and overtake the stag. Seizing the great deer by its antlers, he slung it over his back, and ran with it nearly a mile uphill to Cracra Cross, where the King awaited, laying the buck at the monarch's feet. Kenneth asked the burly forester his clan's name and John, mindful of being a fugitive, replied that he was "but a Scot".

The King decreed that Henceforth, he would be known by all as "the Scott", that name to be borne by all his kin of blood and descent, who would keep the lands about the glen for their chiefly seat; in recognition of those royal awards, the brothers named the glen, and their great House, *Buccleuch* (Gaelic for "grove of the stag").

Their clan adopted the motto "Amo", often interpreted as Latin for "I love," while others hold it's a Scottish word meaning "at the center" (as with "amongst"), which would

prove fitting, as their lands not only occupied the middle portion of the Border Marches, but also because they would come to dominate all rivals as the strongest of the Border clans for five centuries to follow.

After more than a century of renown as rangers and foresters, prominent Scotts of the 13th century included Sir Michael, founder of the cadet house of Balweary. Known as "The Wizard", he was a scholar who spoke and read a half-dozen languages, traveled widely in Europe and the Near East, and was a frequent guest of the Papal court.

A later Sir Michael, the 2nd Laird of Buccleuch, was a supporter of the Bruce, the Declaration of Arbroath, and later, King David II. After great valor at the Battle of Halidon Hill, he was slain at Durham in 1346, leaving two sons.

The elder, Robert, inherited the Buccleuch and Murdockstone estates, to which he added Scotstoun. The younger, John, built the cadet house of Synton, from which came the Lords of Polwarth and Harden.

Walter, the 1st of many of the name, died



*Scott Tartan and Shield*



at the Battle of Homildon in 1402. His son, Robert Scott, traded Glenkerry for Bellendain, a rugged, hilly pass ideal for gathering the clan, and a meeting place the Clan could muster for moonlit raids. Robert also traded Murdockstone for the great estate of Branhholm, which in 1463 became a free barony, held by the yearly fee of a single red rose, paid on St. John's Day.

Among the Scotts of Harden, from which famed novelist Sir Walter Scott claimed descent, was an earlier Walter, called 'Auld Wat', a marauder infamous across the Marches. The old castle of Harden, a keep of this famed freebooter, stands on the brink of a dark and craggy dell, near a tributary of the Teviot. In this secluded vale, Wat kept his stolen English cattle, which fed his family and followers. Whenever his supply of beef ran low, his Lady would 'serve' him a pair of polished spurs on a clean platter, a signal to Auld Wat that he needed to steal more cattle from the Northumbrian pastures to replenish his larder.

At their height, the Scotts could arm and mount 600 warriors within one day; given a week, the Chief could rally another 2,000 men to his banner. Clan Scott was often allied with other great Border families, like the Douglasses and the Armstrongs, though they also endured long, bloody feuds with clans like the Murrays, the Crosers, the Charltons, and, most ardently, the Elliots and the Kerrs.

One of the best examples of Borders mayhem is commemorated in the ballad: "Kinmont Willie", which celebrates the rescue of a reiver

of the Armstrong clan, illegally captured by English troopers while returning from a warden's court.

Though certainly notorious, Willie was on Scottish ground, and under truce; nevertheless, he was taken across the Border and imprisoned at Carlisle Castle. The Scott chief, Buccleuch, then also the Keeper of Liddesdale and an ally of Kinmont Willie, lodged major complaints of this violation of Border law. But Lord Scrope, the Warden, ignored his appeals, as did Robert Bowes, the English ambassador. So, gathering a select band of Scotts and Armstrongs, Buccleuch rode out on a stormy, moonless night, forded the Esk and Eden rivers, and reached Carlisle unseen.

Breaching the castle walls, they overpowered the watch, freed Willie from his dungeon, and with English soldiers in hot pursuit, bore the rescued man off in triumph, regaining the Scottish border two hours after sunrise. When Queen Elizabeth heard of the exploit, she broke into a furious passion, demanding Buccleuch be delivered to her to atone for the insult to her Government. Tense diplomacy ensued, lasting 18 months. Finally, the Scott chief journeyed to London and appeared voluntarily before the Queen, who demanded to know how he dared to storm a fortress in her nation. The reply of the aptly-hailed 'Bold Buccleuch' became famous of itself: "What is it that a man dare not do?"

Elizabeth, for all her Tudor conceits, recognized a true champion when she met one; turning to a lord-in-waiting, she declared, "With a thousand such men, our cousin in Scotland might shake the firmest throne in Europe!"

The lordship of Buccleuch was created in 1606, the earldom in 1619; Francis, 2nd Earl, had two daughters, the younger marrying James, Duke of Monmouth, bastard son of Charles II, who was created Duke of Buccleuch. Though he was beheaded for rebelling against his uncle James VII, the title passed to their eldest son. The third Duke succeeded to the Dukedom of Queensberry as well.



Fortunes ran smoother in that era for their more staunchly Catholic kin at Tarvit; the chieftain of that House, Sir John Scott, founded an Humanities Chair at St. Andrews University in the 1620's, an appointment that the Scott chiefs have sponsored ever since.

Ultimately though, it sometimes takes more than courage or boldness or generosity to defend one's homeland. During the Summer of 1763, at the Mitre Tavern in London, a visiting Scotsman naively praised the awe-inspiring scenery of his native country in the company of England's most touted pundit, the inimitable Dr. Samuel Johnson, and so received his scalding rejoinder: "the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees is the high road that leads him to England", an anecdote so popular it further defamed the worth of the entire Alban nation in the minds of every British subject who heard it repeated.

To combat this slow, worsening slander comes, in time, the efforts of another righteous clansman: in 1810, the not-yet-knighted Walter Scott, after serving as the Sheriff of Selkirk and a Clerk of Court, publishes *The Lady of the Lake*, a stirring historical poem of romance, passion and adventure. Loch Katrine, nestled in the high, rugged gorges of the Trossachs, is the home of its heroine, Ellen Douglas, and her retreat of Ellen's Isle is just short of lyrical in its beauty.

The poem is a roaring triumph with Brits everywhere, and hostelries and guest-lodges spring-up across the glens in short order to welcome a surging new tide of sightseers, eager to trek those fabled landscapes, seeking the exact locales fresh in their memory from Scott's passages, and thus do the misty Highlands take on an allure for holiday travellers that, in truth, has never diminished right through modern times.

Great Britain's infatuation with that wild, windswept Scotland of derring-do and high dudgeon attained its cultural peak in 1856.

Twenty-seven years after Sir Walter invented the 'modern novel' with his book-length

adventure *Waverly*, Queen Victoria, and her consort, Prince Albert, began hosting dignitaries in their own ersatz Caledonian castle at Balmoral. When the Queen of the British Empire visited Loch Katrine, she, like so many other tourists, carried along *The Lady of the Lake* . . . her copy, of course, having been an inscribed gift to her by the author, whom, since her childhood, she had referred to, affectionately, as "my beloved Bard" – a cherishment that must surely have rankled celebrated poet-laureate Alfred Tennyson!

Evidently, patriotism of the pen is a recurrent gift among the Scotts, even in the families that crossed the Atlantic. In 1814, a distant cousin of the Clan, American-born lawyer Francis Scott Key jotted down a poem inspired by his reportage of the British Navy's failure to subjugate the U.S. forces at Fort McHenry, writing verses that soon became immortalized as the "National Anthem of the United States." And just as Scotland is still wild and beautiful, so does America remain free and brave . . . despite whatever's being said in London . . .

**EDITOR'S NOTE: As Cass and Deborah have so skillfully pointed out, a lot of what we know of our Scottish past has been kept alive through clan stories and legends, and in the works of Sir Walter Scott, and other great bards of Scotland. The same holds true for Ireland and other Celtic lands. This ancient penchant for recording family legends and great events has serve us well.**

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

# Celtic Histories

by  
James  
McQuiston

As we explore the “epistemology” or study of how we learn about Celtic culture, we rely, to some degree, on the “etymology” or method in which the words *Celtic* and *Gaelic* originated.

Surprisingly, or perhaps not so surprisingly, they may have the same root!

There has been some hot debate over who was or was not Celtic in the ancient world. The “legend” as to how Scotland became known as such involves one Gaedhal of the Very Gentle and the Shining Armour. Gaedhal was a general of the Egyptian Pharaoh in ancient wars including a great war against the Ethiopians. As the story goes, when the Hebrew slaves deserted their Egyptians overlords, Gaedhal and his people supported the Hebrews. As a result they were exiled from the Egyptian lands. However, the Pharaoh’s daughter, Scots, married into the tribe of Gaedhal. Eventually, with recommendation from their druids, they traveled to Spain and eventually to Ireland. From there they later moved into Scotland as “Scotti” which meant either raiders or wanderers, or perhaps followers of Scots. The land of the Scotti became Scotland.

In last month’s issue we already spoke of Scots and the Stone of Destiny. What is important is that this legend, and others, place the Celts in and around Egypt and the lands of the Bible. On a trip to Egypt I learned that it is even thought that some Celts were involved in building the pyramids and that some Celtic names seem, in fact, to be inscribed within pyramid chambers.

One of the three divisions of the Holy Land was Galilee. Some will argue this word has no relationship to the word Gaelic, while a document from the 15th century claims Jesus was a red-haired, blue-eyed Celt from Galilee. The area between the Holy Land and the European coast facing west is rife with similarly named lands.

The same greater area of western Europe often name Celtica on ancient maps has records of regions with names like Galatia in Turkey, and

Galicia in both Spain and also in an area now shared with Poland and the Ukraine. Celtica was often referred to as Gaul in ancient writings.



ABOVE: This 15th century map of Turkey shows a region known as Galatia. Both an area in Spain and an area near Poland and the Ukraine were named Galicia or Galacia. BELOW: The region comprising most of what was known as Gaul, is shown on this map as Celtica. Directly below this area, across the Alps, is the region of Gallia.



In next month’s issue we will dive deeper into these fringe Celtic lands, but for now, it is obvious that there were many words used to describe the ancient Celtic lands that also have an obvious resemblance to the word Gaelic including Galatians, Galilee, Gaul, Gallia, Galatia, Galicia, Galacia, Gallic, Galles (and Wales, which comes from the same root word).



In Scotland we have Galloway, and in Ireland, Galway. The islands between have been known as Innse Gall. Mercenaries from the Isles who fought principally in Ireland, but also throughout western Europe were known as Gallowglass, Galoglas, or the Gaelic name *gallóglaigh*.

Some say the people of Gaul were the forerunners of the French and others point to the Alsace-Lorraine area of France as the origin of the Celts. The major early source material showing that the Celts were the people of Gaul are the writings of Poseidonios of Apamea, whose words and ideas were quoted by Timagenes, Julius Caesar, the Sicilian Greek Diodorus Siculus, and the Greek geographer Strabo.

Poseidonios was a “renaissance” man from Greece (though born in Syria). Among his many accomplishments was a history of the Celts of Gaul. The Greek and Latin names for Gaul are ultimately derived from the Celtic ethnic or tribal names *Kel-to* and *Gal(a)-to*. Some modern linguists have suggested that the two Greek words *Keltoi* and *Galatai* have a common origin, thus Celtic and Gaelic would also very likely have the same origin, though there are other theories.

We are surrounded by similar words spelled differently or pronounced differently even in the English-speaking nations. For instance, I have been torn, at times, in Celtic Guide articles, as to whether to “Americanize” words from Scottish, Irish and Canadian authors such as archeology vs. archaeology, color vs. colour, check vs. cheque.

Is it mould or mold, gray or grey, plow or plough? The list goes on.

This phenomenon is definitely true with surnames. My own family has at least eight different spellings in use today, even though DNA has proven we are all related.

Further, is a Smythe a Smith, is a Hutchinson a Hucheonson, is a MacGonnell a MacDonald, is a Stuart a Stewart, is a Calhoun a Cahoon? Looking even deeper, is Austin the same as a Houston, is a Crockett really a Craighead?

If, in fact, the Celts did in someway derive from the “lost tribes” of Israel, those of Daniel

and Benjamin, then one of the oldest known mentions of them would have to be the notes recorded by Josephus, an historian from A.D. 70, who writes in his “Antiquities of the Jews” that – “...wherefore there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates until now and are an immense multitude...”.

But, even before Josephus, Julius Caesar, borrowing heavily from Poseidonios and other earlier writers, wrote his *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* (Commentaries on the Gallic War) which is Caesar’s firsthand account of the Gallic Wars, written as a third-person narrative. In it Caesar describes the battles and intrigues that took place in the nine years he spent fighting local armies in Gaul that opposed Roman domination.

The “Gaul” that Caesar refers to is sometimes all of Gaul except for the Roman province of Gallia Narbonensis (modern day Provence), encompassing the rest of modern France, Belgium and some of Switzerland. On other occasions, he refers only to that territory inhabited by the Celtic peoples known to the Romans as Gauls, from the English Channel to Lugdunum (Lyon).

Caesar admits to exterminating over one million Celts in the Alpine region near Germany, Italy and Switzerland, driving them further north and west until they reached the British Isles.

It is a fact that the exact connection of all these tribes and locations with names using the G-A-L sound is still hotly contested, but a birds’eye view of history, of the travels of these people, of their artwork and weaponry, of their continued use and spreading of G-A-L type words, seems to indicate that they are at the very least loosely connected, and perhaps simply the same people going through several historical transitions to become the Celts we think of from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and the Glens of Ireland.

In Ireland, early histories have recorded much of Celtic life, even if at times seen through church eyes. Perhaps the earliest attempt to commit the oral traditions, histories, and genealogy of the Irish race to writing came in the 3rd Century A.D.

with an edict of King Cormac Mac Art to commit the oral tradition of hereditary rule to writing. It was called the *Psalter of Tara* after the traditional site of Irish rule. It originally began with the three sons of Miletius, the pseudo-historical leader of the Milesians, and his issue. In the fifth Century, monks added a whimsical genealogical retrospective back to Adam. Although many historians believe that the recording is fairly accurate back to the fifth or sixth century, the hereditary use of surnames did not come into even limited use in Ireland until the late 800's and was not adopted by the general populace until the early 11th Century. This obviously forms a limit to the scope and precision of traditional genealogical work.

In Scotland, it wasn't until after the Norman invasion of 1066 that surnames came into common use. Sometime before he died in 1165, King Malcolm demanded that all Scots landholders use a surname, to help maintain proper land records throughout the kingdom.

Surnames, themselves, have been a major help in determining clan origins, occupations, etc. as well as showing migration patterns of individual families. Ptolemy, the famous early geographer, recorded a view of early Celtic inhabitants in Great Britain in 150 A.D., even attempting to record some of their tribal names.

The *Annals of Ulster* are an often referred to source of Irish history. These are annals of medieval Irish history and span the years from AD 431 to AD 1540. The entries up to AD 1498 were compiled in the late 15th century by the scribe *Ruaidhrí Ó Luinín*, under his patron *Cathal Óg Mac Maghnusa* on the island of Belle Isle on Lough Erne in the province of Ulster. Later entries (up to AD 1540) were added by others.

*Mac Maghnusa* died in 1498. It is interesting to note that also in 1498 the Bishops of the Isles headquarters were moved from their 1000-year-old location at the foot of the Trotternish peninsula of Skye to the more lowland Campbell lands. Further, a plague hit many towns in Scotland this same year, and likely Ireland, too. In addition,

the last great MacDonald chief from the Lord of the Isles days passed away in 1498 at Paisley Abbey, a cathedral that also burned to the ground in 1498.

How all these activities are related is not yet understood, however, 1498 was without a doubt an eventful year in Gaelic history.

Previous Irish annals dating as far back as the 6th century were used as a source for the earlier entries of the *Annals of Ulster*, and later entries were based on recollection and oral history. It has been said that the main source for *Annals* records of the first millennium AD is the now lost *Chronicle of Ireland*.

The *Annals* used the Irish language, with some entries in Latin. Because the scribe copied its sources verbatim, the *Annals* are useful not just for historians, but also for linguists studying the evolution of the Irish language.

A century later, the *Annals of Ulster* became an important source for the authors of the *Annals of the Four Masters*.

The Library of Trinity College Dublin possesses the original manuscript; the Bodleian Library in Oxford has a contemporary copy that fills some of the gaps in the original.

In addition, old manuscripts and genealogies are occasionally found in old libraries and churches that provide new information or confirm older writings. An example is a Clan Donald genealogy from 1450, found only within the last decade.

Celtic Guide author, Ronald Henderson, gives us some insight into another old manuscript -

*The Cruithneach (Picts), who established  
them in the noble land of Alban?  
With glorious illustrious might  
from what region did they come?*

So begins an ancient poem written in Old Irish concerning the origins of the Picts. This poem forms part of the so-called 'Irish additions' to the 'Historia Britonum', a masterful piece of work compiled and written in Latin around

the late 8th and early 9th centuries by the Welsh historian known as Nennius. Although the Irish poem was composed around the early part of the 11th century, (and we know that it was certainly written before the death of MacBeth in 1057 A.D. for it mentions him in one particular stanza as if he were still alive), it is believed to draw on much older manuscripts, dating from possibly as far back as the 7th century. To our regret, those earlier manuscripts have long been lost.

The poem constitutes a part of what are known as the Pictish 'Foundation Legends', and it gives us some of the earliest pieces of information we have on that race of people. They lived in Scotland long before the Scots (or at least the Scots' culture) came over from Ireland, yet, even so, they appear not to have been the original inhabitants of the country.

~R. Henderson

Some ancient history comes to us from the writing language known as Ogham, sometimes called the "Celtic Tree Alphabet", and based on a high medieval *Bríatharogam* tradition ascribing names of trees to the individual letters.

There are roughly 400 surviving ogham inscriptions on stone monuments throughout Ireland and western Britain. The bulk of them are in the south of Ireland, in Counties Kerry, Cork and Waterford. The largest number outside of Ireland is in Pembrokeshire in Wales.

The remainder are mostly in south-eastern Ireland, Scotland, Orkney Isles, the Isle of Man, and England around the Devon/ Cornwall border \_ all "Celtic" lands.

There are even a few examples of this type of writing found in America which are thought to have been left behind by pre-Columbus explorers.

The vast majority of the inscriptions consist of personal names. Strictly speaking, the word Ogham refers only to the form of letters or script, while the letters themselves are known collectively as the *Beith-luis-nin* after the letter names of the first letters (in the same manner as the Greek Alpha and Beta).

I have found a very obvious link of Ogham to the Gaelic language. The letter *nin* is said to mean "a forked branch." In Scots surname convention *nin* means essentially "grandchild of."

For instance - *Mhuire nin Dòmhnall MicDòmhnall* would most likely be referring to Mary, the granddaughter of Donald MacDonald; her generation representing "a forked branch" of the family tree.



*This page from the 1390 Book of Ballymote offers an explanation of the ancient Celtic Ogham script.*



All the letters of the *Beith-luis-nin* alphabet are themselves named after trees, shrubs, vines, etc, some no longer known to the modern world.

A fair amount of Ogham has been translated, adding to our knowledge of the Celts.

Centuries later, in Scotland, a major effort was made to rediscover ancient Scottish chronicles and the result is the *Scotichronicon* whose story is told earlier in this issue. Many a Scots historian ultimately took part in creating what is known as the “greater *Scotichronicon*”.

In Ireland, the Annals of Ulster are arguably the lead ancient document and their story is told more completely in this issue by guest writer Sharron Gunn, a Scottish History and Gaelic teacher from British Columbia.

In more modern centuries many books have been written to help us dissect our past. A few from my own library that come to mind as being very helpful are: *The Surnames of Scotland*, by George Black; *The Scotch-Irish* by Charles Hanna; *Scotch-Irish Pioneers* by Charles Knowles Bolton; *Acts of the Lords of the Isles* by the Scottish History Society; *Scotland: The Story of a Nation* by Magnus Magnuson; *The Clans*,

*Septs and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands*, by Frank Adam; *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, by Thomas Cahill; and *The Mark of the Scots*, by Duncan Bruce.

These are just a few of the 500 or more titles in my library of Scottish, Irish and Scotch-Irish books. I also have been blessed with gifts of the complete *Clan Donald* records first published between 1896 and 1904 by Rev. Drs. Archibald Macdonald of Kiltarlity and Angus Macdonald of Killearnan, and the equally wonderful condensed version of *Clan Donald* by Donald MacDonald.

Many other resources are available online through search engines, and there are historians, amateur and otherwise, all over the web just waiting to help us all solve the mysteries of the Celts.

All it takes is time and persistence!

From a few Celtic bards sitting around an ancient campfire telling tales of brave chieftains, to the grandfather on the steps of a log cabin filling his grandchildren in on their family legacy, to many a late-night modern researcher pouring over old books and scanning the internet – this is how our Celtic history has been kept alive.

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For centuries the clans and tribes of Scotland and Ireland “gathered” for their feasts, which included great storytelling by bards, and music from the minstrels. This was how clan history and genealogies were preserved, in most cases through oral retelling, and later with the written word.

Gatherings of family members or like-minded individuals have been one of the best ways that our Celtic history has been re-discovered and passed along right up to modern times.

Your Celtic Guide editor has attended the Isle of Skye Highland Games, the Antigonish Highland Games in Nova Scotia (the oldest outside of Scotland) and events in my own area, in particular while performing at the Edinboro (PA) Highland Games, the Jamestown (NY) Celtic Festival, the Erie (PA) Irish Fest, and the Pittsburgh Renaissance Fair, all of which are helping keep the history and culture of the Celts alive.

# The Gathering

by Jim

I can attest that the Highland games are remarkably similar, no matter the location. Perhaps the Scottish games are a slight bit more rugged, the Nova Scotia games a slight bit more musical, and the American events a slight bit more extravagant, though all are a delight.

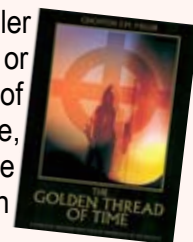
All these types of events help the attendees experience the foods, music, culture, dance and colorful clothing of these ancient countries.

And all over the world, where Celtic culture is celebrated, there are Highland games, Irish music events, renaissance fairs, family society reunions, and historical tours presented by organizations who simply enjoy telling the story in words, music and visual spectacles and tours.

On the following pages are a few examples of this method in which the Celtic culture is made relevant in today’s world.

## 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.



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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.*



Crichton E M Miller

<http://www.crichtonmiller.com>



# HARLAW REVISITED - BATTLEFIELD TOUR 9TH JULY 2012

by Albert Thomson

The first Harlaw battlefield tour was held on Monday 9th July and the weather forecast for the day was cold, windy with intermittent showers. Although the forecast for once turned out to be accurate, the day itself was a most enjoyable social occasion.

Led by Andy Douglas, seven 'Freens' visited a number of locations associated with the battle ending with an invitation to Auld Logie for tea and cakes making this the type of social occasion I envisaged when I came up with the idea of the group "Freens o Reid Harlaw."

Having Andy as our guide was a real bonus. His knowledge about the battle simply whetted our appetite as he, later, was the key speaker at our first annual dinner on 21st July.

Andy is a member of the Aberdeen Wargames Club has been a student of military history since the age of twelve with a passion for Classical Greek wars, the campaigns of Alexander the Great, and the history of Scotland.

Andy was involved in two years of research into Harlaw and the development of a model of the battlefield using 750 figurines painted by 11 club members

The visit started off at the Bass and Little Bass in the area known as the Stanners on the road leading to Keithhall. Led by Andy we climbed to the top of the Bass braving wind and rain where he described these natural

geological features that were the mounds for the medieval castle possibly belonging to Walter Leslie, Constable of Inverurie.

Many authors agree that it was the most likely mustering point for the Earl of Mars' army.

From the Bass, we headed to Kinkell Kirk

The renaissance church built in 1538 replaced an earlier medieval church, said to have belonged firstly to the Knights Templar then the Knights Hospitaller. It is also the location of the engraved burial slab identifying Sir Gilbert de Greenlaw, believed to have been a relation of Gilbert de Greenlaw, Bishop of Aberdeen 1390-1421.

The grave slab is unusual as it is engraved on two sides, having been reused for a Forbes in 1592. The burial slab now stands upright within the walls of the Kirk and is well worth visiting. The 'Freens' have already made initial approaches to try and have the slab better protected and preserved.

Thereafter, we headed for Harlaw stopping off at Johnnie Kelly's Lass which is situated near to Balhalgardy Cottages. These are the remnants of a standing stone circle. A 1771 survey showed this was a six-stone circle while by 1964 a similar survey found a single stone with at least 22 cup-marks.



*The Bass, Inverurie*



*The de Greenlaw slab & 'Freens' with Andy Douglas at the rear left.*

Onward the group followed Andy to the site of the Village of Harlaw just behind Harlaw House.

Andy described village itself, the location of twelve skeletons found in the 19th century and finally the Liggars Stane, one of two standing stones from a 1840 survey original position due north of Harlaw House and said to mark the spot where the Highland females, killed in the battle, were buried.

By now, we were all ready for a break and headed to Auld Logie and the home of Leopard Magazine where Lindy Cheyne and Ian Hamilton had prepared a wonderful spread – teas, coffees and fabulous home baking.

We spent an enjoyable couple of hours covering multiple subjects from baking through to local history and of course Harlaw. What a great time we had and Lindy and Ian were great hosts and we cannot thank them enough for their kind invitation.

By now the day was wearing on and we headed for our final stop at the Harlaw Monument itself allowing Andy to describe the positions of the cairns of Irvine of Drum, Red Hector and Provost Davidson.

We were also given an indication of the topography of the site at the time of Harlaw in particular the location of a loch that was finally drained in the 1830's and the effect that would have had on the strategy of the two armies.

All in all, we were on the go from 10am until 4pm when we all went our separate ways.

Everyone agreed that this was a great day out and a great way to understand the battle and places associated with the event. It was also a great social occasion.

We cannot thank Andy enough for his efforts and our knowledge is certainly has been enhanced. This was what the 'Freens' are all about and more 'days out' are planned.

### 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.



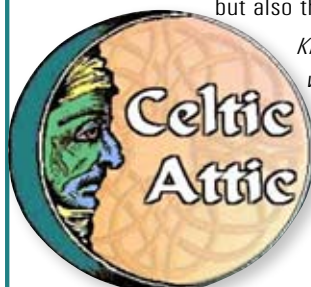
### Artzy Claddagh Shamrock Cake Topper

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!"*

<http://www.celticattic.com>





# The “Games”

Jim McQuiston

Eight bagpipe groups lay over the hill making a minimum of tuning noise. They represented a million or more dollars in instruments and clothing and a few hundred ardent band members. On cue, they began “Scotland the Brave” and slowly their leads broke over the grassy knoll to the applause and amazement of the attendees at the Edinboro (PA) Highland Games. In the crowd, that year, was the great Scottish fiddler Alasdair Fraser, who later spent some wonderful time with this author. What a moment it was! This year’s games are scheduled for September 6-9, and are featuring Seven Nations along with the 2012 US National Scottish Fiddling Championships.

*A lone piper began the show with his mournful “Amazing Grace”. He was joined for the second verse by his entire pipe band. For the third verse three additional pipe bands broke into song. By the fourth and last verse a complete drum and bugle corp joined four pipe bands in a most*

*stirring finale to this song. Such was the scene at the Jamestown (NY) Celtic Fest, in their early years. Today, the fest has grown to include nine pipe bands and will be held August 25th. Among its many performers will be the author’s duo Celtic Creek, which has been with the games since its very beginning.*

Farm boys took on city boys at a very rugged tug of war match. The stage in the distance held some of the best Nova Scotian fiddlers, piano players and musicians to be found. The event was the Antigonish Highland Games, the oldest games outside of Scotland. As her fiddler sawed away at lightning speed, pianist Hilda Chiasson-Cormier hit a lefthanded bass line that even she had never heard before. I asked her later what it was she did and she had no idea, though it brought a smile out of her and her fiddler, along with the crowd. A trip around the Ceilidh Trail of Cape Breton proved these great musicians were not alone.



<http://www.yesscotland.net>

A young lone piper stood just outside Eileandonan Castle captivating the crowd. As he finished, a woman next to me said, "That's my son!" She was obviously American and I learned her family was from Pittsburgh, PA. Her son's pipe band was the only American youth band invited to the Scottish championships. Also, there, that year was a pipe band from Chicago that performed at the Isle of Skye Games. At these games several young giants with names like Angus and Ian fought to make the best toss of the weight over the bar. When none could achieve a higher throw the winner was announce. Then the announcer, a rugged Highlander no doubt in his late 60s, said, "Wait a minute, there's a last minute entry!" He proceeded to the bar and threw the weight at least two feet higher than the younger contestants had. The crowd cheered with applause as he took the microphone once again to announce the next event. In spite of all the events I have been to, seeing and hearing the Isle of Skye pipe band and the Isle of Lewis pipe band as we stood atop a

wind-whipped knoll, told me I was "home."

*This year in Prescott, Arizona, the second Prescott Celtic Music Festival will feature two full stages of Celtic music on August 18th at Watson Lake Park. On the main stage will be the bands Traveler, Crosswind, and Phx plus the Celtic Rock band, The Brazenheads. The traditional stage will feature Shepard's Pie, Traditional Blend, Iona, and Tom Thomas. Look it up on the web for more info.*

The long-time Erie (PA) Irish Fest will take place again from September 15th through the 17th, with many great bands and vendors returning, and news ones being added.


*There are Highland Games springing up all over the world not too disimilar from each other. The same is true for Irish events and Celtic music festivals, and family society meetings.*

*From a neighborhood Irish music sessions to a full-fledged music fest or Highland Games this is just one more way our Celtic culture gets passed on from generation to generation.*

ANCIENT HISTORY FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

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by Debbie Kennett  
*Family Tree DNA*

# EXPLORING YOUR ANCESTRY THROUGH DNA TESTING

Most people will know the names of their grandparents and perhaps their great-grandparents. With careful research the avid genealogist can often trace his or her family tree back for many more generations, but there always comes a point where the written records run out. Yet hidden in our DNA we each have our own historical record which can tell us not only about our recent ancestors but also our deep ancestry going back for many thousands of years. In this article we will look at the three different types of DNA test and how they can help you learn more about your ancestry and your Celtic past.

## Y-CHROMOSOME TESTS

The Y-chromosome DNA (Y-DNA) test can be used to explore the direct paternal line, which in most cultures corresponds with the transmission of surnames. Women do not have a Y-chromosome and the Y-DNA test has to be taken by a male, though women usually have a brother, father, uncle or cousin who can take a test on their behalf for the surname of interest. The Y-chromosome is passed on from father to son virtually unchanged, but every now and then small mistakes occur in the copying process. By examining these tiny differences in the Y-DNA we can work out how closely two men are related. The standard Y-DNA test looks at 37 locations on the Y-chromosome which are known as markers. Your markers are then compared

with other men in the database to see who you match. With a 37-marker test fathers and sons, brothers, and first cousins will usually match on 37/37 markers or, rarely, 36/37 markers. Eighth cousins sharing a common ancestor back in the 1600s might match on 35/37 markers. If you have too many mismatches you will not share a common ancestor within a genealogical time frame or, in other words, from the time when surnames came into being. Y-DNA tests are typically used in surname projects to explore the origins of a surname and to establish how many lineages are related. A man with a surname from Scotland might match another man with the same surname from Ireland and this will confirm that the two branches are connected even if there is no paper trail to prove the link. Similarly, if your research is stuck in Virginia in the 1600s a match with another man “across the pond” will tell you where your surname originated.

## FINDING A SURNAME PROJECT

Family Tree DNA is the market leader in the field of genetic genealogy. They were the first company to introduce the Y-DNA test back in the year 2000. They now offer the widest range of tests and, most importantly, they have the world’s largest genetic genealogy database giving you the best chance of finding a match. Y-DNA tests are normally co-ordinated within surname projects, and there are now almost 7,000 surname projects at FTDNA. The company also



hosts many large geographical projects. The Scottish DNA project is administered by a team at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow and has almost 5,000 members. The Ireland DNA project has over 4,600 members, and the Wales project has almost 500 members. A new project has also been set up to explore the Y-DNA of Cornwall, the English county which has been most influenced by the Celtic culture. There are also numerous projects for Scottish and Irish clans such as Clan Fraser and Clan Donald.

## DEEP ANCESTRY

The Y-DNA test can also be used to explore your deep ancestry. When you receive your DNA results you will be given a haplogroup assignment. A haplogroup is a broad population grouping of people who belong on the same branch of the tree of mankind. Ultimately all men share a common ancestor known as Y-chromosomal Adam who is thought to have lived about 140,000 years ago. The descendant branches of Y-Adam are given names using different letters of the alphabet. Haplogroups A and B are mostly found in Africa, whereas haplogroup C is found in Asia. Haplogroup R1b is the most common haplogroup in Western Europe and has an especially high incidence in Spain, Portugal and Western France. It is also the predominant haplogroup in the British Isles and is found in about 70% of English men and over 90% of Irish men. The haplogroups have lots of sub-branches known as subclades, many of which arose in the last few thousand years and which often have precise geographical origins. To find out your subclade you need to test for special markers known as SNPs (pronounced “snips”). One particular subclade identified by the marker L21 is particularly associated with Celtic ancestry. A branch of L21, known as M222, is the subclade of the Ui Neill Clan, the

descendants of the semi-legendary Niall of the Nine Hostages.

## MITOCHONDRIAL DNA TESTS

A woman passes on her mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) to her sons and daughters, and an mtDNA test can be taken either by a man or a woman. However, only women can pass on mtDNA to the next generation, and an mtDNA test will therefore track the direct maternal line (your mother, your mother’s mother, your mother’s mother’s mother and so on). It’s much more difficult to research the female line because the surname changes with each generation, but an mtDNA test can also help you to explore your deep ancestral origins on your maternal line. We all descend from a single woman known as mitochondrial Eve who lived about 200,000 or so years ago. The daughter branches of Eve are again divided into haplogroups which have distinct geographical origins. Haplogroup H is the most common mtDNA haplogroup in Western Europe, and is found in about 40% of the population of the British Isles. FTDNA’s mtDNAPlus test will tell you your haplogroup and will give you matches within the company’s large database. The gold standard mtDNA test is the full mitochondrial sequence test from FTDNA which sequences the entire mitochondrial genome. This test gives a detailed subclade assignment and the matches are more likely to be within a genealogical time frame.

## AUTOSOMAL DNA TESTS

The Family Finder test from Family Tree DNA is the newest DNA test and was introduced in the spring of 2010. It looks at around 700,000 markers across the entire genome. Autosomal DNA is shuffled up with each new generation, and passed on randomly. Relationships can

be predicted based on the number and length of shared segments of DNA. The larger the segments the closer the relationship will be. The test can be taken by both men and women and will help you to find connections on all your ancestral lines, but is best suited for finding matches with close cousins within the last five or so generations.

## CONCLUSION

It is an exciting time to participate in the world of genetic genealogy. The Y-DNA and mtDNA tests have been available for more than

a decade. Family Tree DNA now has almost 250,000 Y-DNA results in its database and nearly 150,000 mtDNA results so most people stand a good chance of finding matches. The tests will put you in touch with your genetic cousins from around the world and can be used as an aid to genealogical research and to explore your deep ancestry. Each haplogroup has its own story to tell and by testing the Y-DNA and mtDNA of living people we have a unique window into the past. The more people who take these tests the more we will learn about the migratory paths of our ancestors on their journey out of Africa.

### WEBSITES

[www.familytreedna.com](http://www.familytreedna.com) Family Tree DNA

[www.isogg.org](http://www.isogg.org) The International Society of Genetic Genealogy

[www.isogg.org/wiki](http://www.isogg.org/wiki) ISOGG wiki

[www.ysearch.org](http://www.ysearch.org) A public Y-DNA database sponsored by Family Tree DNA

[www.mitosearch.org](http://www.mitosearch.org) A public mtDNA database sponsored by Family Tree DNA

### PROJECTS

[www.familytreedna.com/public/Ireland%20-%20MtDNA](http://www.familytreedna.com/public/Ireland%20-%20MtDNA) Ireland mtDNA Project

[www.familytreedna.com/public/irelandheritage](http://www.familytreedna.com/public/irelandheritage) Ireland Y-DNA Project

[www.scottishdna.net](http://www.scottishdna.net) Scottish DNA Project

[www.genpage.com/walesdnaproject.html](http://www.genpage.com/walesdnaproject.html) Wales DNA Project

[www.familytreedna.com/public/cornwall](http://www.familytreedna.com/public/cornwall) Cornwall DNA Project

Debbie Kennett is the author of *DNA and Social Networking* (History Press, 2011) and *The Surname Handbook* (to be published by the History Press in October 2012). She is the administrator of three DNA projects at Family Tree DNA – the Devon DNA project, the Cruise/Cruse/Cruwys DNA project, and the mtDNA haplogroup U4 project.

*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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# Annals of Ulster

of the Early Middle Ages AD 500-1000

by Sharron Gunn

Annals are records of events noted down year by year by monks in monastic scriptoria (writing rooms): the death of bishops, abbots, battles, sieges and raids. Although often brief, they are the best source for the history of the Early Middle Ages in Scotland and elsewhere. But that doesn't mean they are totally accurate. Quite the contrary.

The monks incorporated local legends and myths with Biblical material for the period before they became Christian. In Ireland and Scotland the monks invented a connection between the peoples of the Bible and the Gaels of Ireland and Scotland; they invented a genealogy which 'proved' they were descended from an Egyptian pharaoh's daughter called Scota. This myth of origin was used in the Declaration of Arbroath of 1320 to justify Scotland's independence from England.

You can follow the introduction of Christianity to the west of Scotland in the most accurate parts of the annals produced by Christian monks; St Columba (Colum Cille) is particularly well-represented. You can read about the arrival of the Vikings and the creation of the kingdom of Alba, whose people were strong enough to resist conquest by the Norse.

## **The Emperor Constantine's Leprosy**

Here is a sample of a quirky mix of Biblical and local history from the Annals of Ulster and note the date -- over 6000 years ago! I'll give the original language first (italics) then an English translation (bold face).

4296 BC *Constantinus ex concunina Helena filius in Brittannia creatus [imperator] regnavit. xxxv. aut l. 7 mensibus .ix. Hic cum elifantino arreptus est morbo medici consilium ei dederunt*

*ut in therma, i. hi linn aut hi fothrugud, sanguine infantium plena calldo laueretur...*

**4296 BC Constantinus, his son by the concubine Helenain Britannia, made [emperor], ruled thirty-five or fifty years and nine months. When he was stricken with elephantiasis, doctors advised him to bathe in a warm bath -- i.e. a pool or bath -- full of the warm blood of infants. When he was tempted to do so and was about to begin [the slaughter], the king, moved by the lamentation of the mothers, said I will not do this though I be forever a leper. The following night the apostles Peter and Paul appeared to him and said: Call Pope Sylvester and he will show you a bath that will cure you.**

**When he had done so, and having fasted was baptized, he saw a hand sent from heaven to him touching him at the moment of baptism, and immediately, sloughing the leprosy, the king was healed.**

The misconceptions are legion. Where to start? Leprosy and elephantiasis are mixed up. How did they determine exactly when Constantius reigned and suffered this disease? Who knows? Peter and Paul appeared in a dream to a man who seemed to know who they were -- but 6000 years ago? Christ died 2000 years ago. Peter and Paul died after him. And "call Sylvester??" Sylvester I became Pope in 314, some 4500 years after the entry. But here we have a clue to the real date of the entry.

This is actually a reference to Constantine, the first Roman emperor who was baptised a Christian, and whose edict in 313 stopped the persecution of Christians. According to the Acts of Sylvester, he was baptised, but became an apostate (non-Christian again). As a result he developed leprosy.



No one is quite sure if he really developed leprosy at all, But the writer of the annals had a source in which this story occurs and incorporated it into the prehistoric part of the annals. He just got the dates a little mixed up. The Gaels (and other northerners) were a bit hazy about dates before their own conversion which is on record in the sixth century AD. What was important to them was the miracle of Constantine's recovery and his second conversion.

The monks tended to exaggerate numbers involved in battles, fewer on the side they favoured and more on the opposite. That made everyone feel better on their side. And the date of a given event may vary by up to 20 years between one annal and another. But they do provide dates which is unusual for manuscripts of the Early Middle Ages in northern Europe.

### *Strange Weather in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*

Usually a chronicle is a summary of past events which was often written with a political purpose in mind: to glorify the kings of a nation or to discredit the kings of another nation or a competing branch of a royal dynasty.

You can find all sorts of intriguing tidbits in the annals -- like the following weather report from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (a compilation of several annals). Notice the anticlimatic entry on the death of Sicga.

**AD793 In this year terrible portents appeared over Northumbria and miserably frightened the inhabitants: these were exceptional flashes of lightning and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air. A great famine soon followed these signs, and a little after that in the same year, on 8 January, the harrying of the heathen [Vikings] miserably destroyed God's church in Lindisfarne, by rapine and slaughter. And Sicga passed away on 22 February.**

### *The Gaelic Annals*

Often the material recorded in the annals of the north of Ireland is very similar to what was recorded in annals written in Scotland and the north of England -- the Columban church was established in these regions; the monks shared their sources.

Clonmacnoise (*Cluan mhic Nòis* = Plain of the sons of Nòs) was a large monastery located on the ridges of sand and gravel formed by glaciers which created a natural highway through the bogs of central Ireland. It was an affluent monastery which attracted visitors from all over Europe. The Annals of Tigernach, for which there are entries between AD 489 and 1178, are thought to have been written in Clonmacnoise because of many references to events in the north of Ireland and Scotland.

### *Possibly the earliest reference to a Scottish king and Dàl Riata:*

*AD 501 Feargus Mor mac Earca cum gente Dalriada partem Britanniae tenuit & ibi mortuus est.*

**AD 501 Fergus Mor son of Erc with the people of Dàl Riata held a part of Britain and there he died.**

Dàl Riata was a sea-kingdom which included part of the north of Ireland, the Inner Hebrides and mainland Argyll. Scoti from the north of Ireland had been migrating to Kintyre long before AD 500 (Anderson 1922: 3). Although is unclear when the kingdom was established, about AD 500 its political centre moved from the north of Ireland to Dunadd in Argyll where the kings of Dàl Riata were inaugurated for centuries after.

*AD 562 Bass Gabrain maic domanguirt ríg Alban.*

*Teichedh do Albanaib ria mBruidhi mac Maelchon ríg Cruithnech.*

**AD 562 The death of Gabran, Domangart's son, king of Scotland. Flight of the Scots before Brude, Maelchon's son, king of the Picts.**

Pressure from the Picts is recorded here; the Gaels of Dàl Riata fled from them.

Gaelic Dàl Riata occupied a good portion of western Scotland, but in the north and east, the Picts had powerful kings who challenged the existence of the Gaelic kingdom. They subjugated Scottish Dàl Riata in the seventh century and dominated the Gaels of Dàl Riata for most of the next 200 years. And note the word in Old Common Gaelic (aka Old Irish) for Pict is *Cruithnech*.

### **The most unfortunate King of Dàl Riata**

Donald Breac ruled for many years and must have been a good king, but he had little success in battle. In the first entry he was fighting with Aed and they were victorious;

*AD 621 Cath Chind Delgthen, in quo cederunt da mac Libren, maic Illaind, maic Cerbuill. Conall mac Suibne, victor erat, et Domnoll Breacc cum eo...*

**AD 621 The battle of Cend-Delgthen, in which fell the two sons of Libren, son of Illann, son of Cerball. Conall, son of Suibne, was the conqueror and with him Donald Breac.**

After he became king, he couldn't win a battle, it seems. But he was considered a good king by churchmen and he reigned for 15 years.

*AD 637 Cath Glinne Mairison, in quo muindter Domnaill Bricc do teichedh, et obsessio Etain.*

**AD 637 The battle of Glen Mairison in which the people of Donald Breac fled and the siege of Etan.**

*AD 643 Postea Domnall Brecc i Cath Strath Carruin in fine anni in Decimpre interfectus est.*

*quinto decimo [anno] regni sui ab Ohan reghe Britonum.*

**AD 643 Afterwards Donald Breac was slain in the battle of Strathcarron, in the end of the year, in December, in the fifteenth year of his reign, by Owen, king of the Britons.**

### **Colum Cille - St Columba**

The birth of St Columba was recorded years after the event:

*AD 520 Colam Cille natus est...*

*Gein chain Colaim ar clerig indiu os Erinn eolaig for aenlith, ni rad n-uabair bas bin buadhaig maic Bronaigh.*

**AD 520 Colum Cille was born...**

**The fair birth of Columba, our priest, [took place] today, upon learned Ireland, on the same festival (no vain saying) as the death of Bronach's fair-haired victorious son. [7 December]**

The battle of Cill Dremin was likely the reason that Columba had to leave Ireland; he may have had a part in it which was inappropriate for a priest.

A later saint's life gives the reason as copying a book without permission, but this is likely a fabrication.

*AD 559 Cath Chile Dremni for Diarmuid MacCerbuill. Forcus 7 Donmall, da mac Muirchertaigh maic Earca, 7 Ainmiri mac Dedna 7 Nindidh mac Duach 7 Aed mac Eachach Tirmcharna rí Connacht uictores erant per orationem Coluim Cille ...*

**AD 559 The battle of Cùil dremne gained over Diarmait, son of Cerball. Forcus and Domnall, two sons of Muirchertach mac Erca, and Ainmire, son of Setna, and Nindid and Duach, and Aed, son of Eochaid Dryflesh, king of Connacht, were victors through the prayer of Colomb Cille ...**

This entry like many in Gaelic Ireland and

Scotland was written in a wild mixture of Gaelic and Latin.

And the annals record when St Columba left for Scotland:

*AD 562 Navigacio Coluim Cilli ad insulam Ie etatis sue quadragesimo quinto.*

**AD 562 The sailing of Columba to the island of Iona, in the forty-fifth year of his age.**

### *The Annals of Ulster*

The exact date of the battle and Columba's leaving Ireland varies in different annals as does his age. About AD 562-3 Colum Cille (St Columba) left Ireland and established his monastery on the island of Iona, the mother house of the Columban Church. Daughter houses were later established in the west of Scotland and the north of Ireland. There were annals written on Iona which have been lost; however, at least a portion of them are embedded in the Annals of Ulster. The Gospel book now called the Book of Kells was likely written in Iona and taken to the north of Ireland somewhere between 800 and 825 -- after several Viking raids.

That part of the Annals of Ulster which was written in Iona and not the north of Ireland is shown by the point of view of the annalists and by information about Colum Cille (St Columba) and his church. There were more events noted which took place in Scotland and fewer in Ireland including:

*AD 574 Mors Conaill mac Comghaill anno regni .xvi. sui aui obtulit insulam Iae Columbe Cille*

**AD 574 Death in the 16th year of his reign of Conall son of Comghall who granted the island of Iona to Colum Cille.**

Not many people in Ireland would know who granted Colum Cille the land and likely they'd not care. Below the annals recorded the death of the king of Picts:

*AD 584 Mors Bruide mc Maelcon regis Pictorum ...*

**AD 584 Death of Brude son of Maelchu, king of the Picts ...**

In the next entry you'll see that important churchmen don't die, they 'sleep', 'rest' or 'repose'.

*AD 592 Quies Coluim Cille in nocte dominica pentecostes, quintidh luin anno perigrinacionis sue .xxxv. etatis uer .lxx.vii.*

**AD 592 The repose of Columcille on the Sunday night of Pentecost, the fifth before the Ides [middle] of June, in the thirty-fifth year of his pilgrimage, and the seventy-fifth year of his life.**

The fortresses which existed in the Early Middle Ages (AD 400-1000) are also mentioned in the Annals of Ulster: Etin (Edinburgh) and Dundaff (near Stirling), and Dunottar on the Highland periphery as well as Dunadd, Dundurn, Dunollie and Dunaverty in the Highlands.

### *The Coming of the Vikings*

The annals mention the coming of the Vikings who are called *genntibh* in Gaelic or *gentibus* in Latin (gens = tribe, nation, people). This word came to mean 'heathens'.

*AD 798 Combustio Inse Patraicc o genntibh, 7 borime na crich do breith 7 scrin Do-Chonna do briseadh doaibh 7 innreda mara doaib cene Erinn & Albain.*

**AD 798 The burning of the Island of Patrick by the heathens and they took the cattle tribute of the territories, and broke the shrine of Do-Chonna, and also made great incursions both in Ireland and Scotland.**

*AD 802 I Columbe Cille a gentibus combusta est.*

**AD 802 Iona of Colum Cille was burned by the heathens.**

A few years later the Vikings were called



*Norddmannaibh* (Northmen); some monks had figured out where the ‘heathens’ came from.

*AD 837 Longas tre-fichet long di Norddmannaibh for Boinn ...*

**AD 837 A naval force of the Norsemen sixty ships strong was on the Boinn [River]...**

After the Viking invasions and occupation of Iona, the annals ceased to be written there, and knowledge of the West Highlands is limited to Norse sagas for the ninth century. But annals continued to be written in Ireland, Lowland Scotland and the north of England.

The Vikings were also called *Gallaibh* (foreigners) in Irish annals. In 851 a distinction was made between fair foreigners (Finn-gallaibh) and dark heathens (Dubgennti) which might refer to one lot of Vikings who had come earlier and another who arrived later about whom less was known.

*AD 851 Tetact Dubgennti Ath Cliath coralsat ár mór du Finn-gallaibh 7 coro slatsat in longport eitir doin 7 moine.*

**AD 851 The Dark heathens came to Ath Cliath [Dublin], made a great slaughter of the Fair-haired foreigners, and plundered the naval encampment, both people and property.**

The Annals also have entries about Kenneth MacAlpine, who became king of Dál Riata (i.e. king of Scots) and then two years later king of Picts. According to annals written in his time, he was a successful king who destroyed his enemies in battle, and reigned for 16 years. According to Chronicles of the High Middle Ages written several hundred years later, he murdered the Pictish nobility, and that explains why they disappeared so suddenly. Well did he?? That’s the topic of another story.

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**Christine Woodcock, Tour Facilitator**

# Who's Who AT THE CELTIC GUIDE

I'd like to take a moment to identify those people who have, so far, helped make Celtic Guide what it is, over the last eight issues. I begin with myself, only to provide references for my interest and reliability as editor and publisher -

**Jim McQuiston**- Scottish/Irish; Pennsylvania, USA; long-time performer of Celtic music and past writer of articles for Highlander magazine and the Scotch-Irish Society of the U.S.A. newsletter, as well as a few books, and many words online. Have traveled three times to Scotland and once each to Ireland, England, Nova Scotia, Yukon and Alaska, Egypt, the originally Celtic cities of Zurich, Milan and Munich, and to many sites across North America, Europe and the Caribbean. Researched in libraries and museums in most of these places.

**Rod Perry**- Alaska; Scottish and Irish heritage; most likely the world's expert on the Iditarod dog sled races, and our first contributing author, (Feb. 2012) providing a story on the Scots connection to the Iditarod. Rod has also been a major cheerleader for the magazine, introducing us to a writer for National Geographic, and to many others through his vast connections.

**Ed and Star Jones**- New Mexico and Dawson City, Yukon; Ed has Scottish, Irish and Welsh heritage, having spoken the Welsh language as a child. Ed and Star were extremely instrumental in my understanding of early Celts in the Yukon River Valley, including introducing me to many Yukon River historians, in person, at Dawson City, Yukon, and Eagle, Alaska. Ed and Star are authors in their own right and have researched many reports for the governments of both Alaska and Yukon.

**The Gaelic College of Nova Scotia**- on a visit to this wonderful school and museum I was handed much information on the influential Reverend Norman MacLeod. The staff even provided me with a photograph of a just-finished portrait of MacLeod to use with the article on him (Jan. 2012).

**Scott Prestopino**, Office Manager, and **Hilary Beirne**, Executive Secretary, for the **New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade**- who provided several emails with information on that granddaddy of all parades.

**Kristin Olsen**- the U. S. West Coast, owner of the online Celtic import shop, **Celtic Attic**, and an author of books and many online stories; a great supporter of Celtic Guide.

**Crichton Miller**- A Scot who now hails from England; undoubtedly the world's expert on the Celtic Cross, author of books and many online articles on the subject; another great supporter of the Celtic Guide.

**Cameron Morrison**- Edinburgh, Scotland; has provided Celtic Guide with several excellent photographs including one cover shot (April 2012).

**Cass & Deborah Wright**- Vermont; This couple is in the midst of writing a book on Highland clans and on attendance at Highland Games. The book will be called *Henceforth Tales*, and so they have provided a monthly column (since April 2012) by the same name always gearing it towards the theme of that particular month's issue. By the time this is read, I will have met with Cass and Deborah at a Celtic event in New Hampshire.

**Victoria Roberts**- Pittsburgh, PA; A novelist who uses historically accurate Scottish themes.

Victoria has been a great supporter, has provided the Cameron Morrison photos, and has introduced CG to a number of new readers, in addition to providing us with some great stories.

**Rebecca Knowles-** New Mexico and Scotland; a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, born in Scotland and involved in a potentially dramatic rebuilding of an ancient castle, there.

**Albert Thomson-** Aberdeen, Scotland; progenitor of the organization “Freens o’ Reid Harlaw” and provider of many tales about Scotland, many yet to be published.

**Cindy Vallar-** Texas; a long-time researcher and writer on Scottish history and on Pirates, with her own extensive website on these subjects. Was invaluable in helping produce our “pirate” issue.

**Scott Woodburn-** Ireland; A minister in the Presbyterian church and provider of great tales from Ireland, Scott has been very supportive and enthusiastic in helping the Celtic Guide represent Ireland’s part in the Celtic story.

**Sharron Gunn-** British Columbia; 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. She will be an invaluable asset to the Guide.

**Andy Douglas-** Scotland; Andy is an amateur yet quite skilled researcher and historian, particularly of the Battle of Red Harlaw. He obviously digs deep into past writings, and uses old maps and a lot of common sense in his analysis.

**Ronald Henderson-** Scotland; Ron travels far and wide in his beloved country and has written a great deal, much of which he has shared with the Guide, and which will appear

in bits and pieces along the way. He is a great supporter of our efforts and provides a unique insight.

**Joshua Mark-** Upstate New York; Mark is an Editor for the online *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. He has lived in Greece and Germany, and traveled throughout Egypt and Scotland. His well-rounded understanding of ancient history is something to look forward to.

**James Wiener-** USA; a Director and the Public Relations Manager for the *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, James won the St. Andrew’s Society Scottish Scholarship for the Sarasota, FL chapter and has written extensively on Celtic subjects. He will begin writing soon for Celtic Guide.

**Christine Woodcock-** Canada; Professional genealogist and conductor of genealogy tours of Scotland, has provided us with some great ideas and tools to search for our families.

**Family Tree DNA-** Bennett Greenspan is CEO and Max Blankfeld is VP of Operations for this leader in DNA research. Debbie Kennett wrote the article which appears in this issue of Celtic Guide. Their insight will be invaluable.

**Carolyn Emerick-** Carolyn volunteered to build a Facebook page for the Celtic Guide and it has dramatically increased the number of hits we get each day. She is in the midst of studying library and archiving skills. Though she typically charges for her Facebook skills, she kindly donated them for the sake of the Celtic Guide and her love of history.

I began this magazine as its only writer and with a simple hope that the stories told would be enjoyed and that others would join in with their own stories. It looks like that and more has happened. If I have missed anyone, my apologies. Thank you to all, and to all the readers across the Celtic world who have written emails or just log on each month to see what’s new.



# by Christine Woodcock THE QUEST FOR OUR SCOTTISH ANCESTORS

We really are so fortunate to have Scottish ancestry—in so many ways, not the least of which is how relatively easy it is to find them. ScotlandsPeople were the first to make digitized records available online. This is the website for the Registrar General where all of the statutory records are kept, as well as parish registers, census records, valuation records, Kirk session records, and wills and testaments. This is the **ONLY** website where you can view the actual image. Other websites, like Ancestry, only have indexes. FindMyPast.co.uk is owned by the same company that runs the Scotland People website (Brightsolid), so they have actually transcribed the images, although the images themselves are not available through FMP. This is true, too, of FamilySearch.

Researching our Scottish ancestors is a fairly easy task. Knowing where to look is usually where we get tied up. Following these hints should help:

THE place for Scottish records, of course, is the office of the General Register (GRO). Their website is the repository for all official documents: birth, marriage, death, census, valuation rolls, wills and testaments. Here's what you need to know:

✓ The website is: <http://scotlandspeople.gov.uk>. It is a pay-per-view site, so be prepared. You can purchase 30 credits for £7. It is one credit to view the index and five additional credits to view the image of the record. So, 6 credits to get to that point. At today's exchange rate, that is about 35¢ per image. Cheap at twice the rate! Credits are purchased in bundles of 30 and are good for one year from the date of purchase. So, if you purchase 30 credits on May 1, they will last you until April 30 of next year. If in June,

you decide to give genealogy up for the summer and have 4 credits left, when you resume your research in September, you can add 30 credits to your existing 4 and you will then have 34 credits for one year from September! (Just like roll-over minutes on a phone plan!)

✓ Civil Registration didn't start until 1855. Before that date, you need to look at the Old Parish Registers (OPRs). Find that link on the left hand side of the website and enter the data fields. You will get very little information from the OPRs, so don't be too disappointed.

✓ OPR Baptisms: You won't get birth dates, since documenting a birth was not the responsibility of the church. What you will get is a recorded statement about the child's baptism. This will give you the date, the parish and the name of at least one parent, sometimes both parents.

✓ OPR Burials: Rather than death records, you will get burial records or the statement about the purchase of a "mortcloth" for dressing the dead. Burial records are important, since few Scots were of a stature where they could afford a headstone. Therefore, you won't find a Monumental Inscription no matter how hard you look. For instance, the Glasgow Necropolis is 37 acres. It has 50,000 internments, 3500 headstones and 32 mausoleums. But the remaining 46,500 are all buried in common ground. No headstones, no monuments. The only way you would know your ancestor was buried there is by reading the burial records in the Parish Registers for Glasgow.

✓ OPR Marriages: you will get documentation of the reading of the Banns (the intention of the couple to marry was announced for three successive Sundays prior to the marriage.)

✓ Don't forget to check the census records. This will give you not only the name of your ancestor, but the people in their family as well. From this you will glean enough information to help you ensure that you are searching the RIGHT family. You will find the name of the head of the household, usually the father/husband unless he is deceased or away at work on that particular night. If the husband was away, his wife will be listed as the head. All children residing in the home will also be listed along with their ages. Remember that it was not uncommon for children as young as 13 to be away at work. In this case, you will need to do another search just under their name and if they were with another family as a boarder, you should be able to find them.

Remember that the ages on the census are approximate since the census was usually done in March, so when you then go to search the civil records for births, make sure you allow for a two or three year window.

Census & Birth records are accessible to the public after 100 years. Scotland takes this time frame very seriously so for any newer records, you will not be able to access them online. You can see the index for births right up to about two years ago, although if you wish to view the actual image, you will need to order it from the Registrar General.

On the birth records, you will find the maiden name of the mother, which will help you to build her family tree. Again, don't forget to check for her family on the census returns under her maiden name and you will come up with her siblings as well. You will also find the date and place of marriage for the parents of the new baby. This will give you the information you need to proceed with searching marriage records.

The most recent census available online is the 1911 census. To fill in information since 1911, you can access the 1915 valuation rolls. More of these will be added later this year. The next year for valuation rolls to go online will be the 1905 rolls, giving you information between the 1901 & 1911 census years.

Marriage Records are accessible after 75 years. Again, the indexes are available up to a couple of years ago, but you need to send away for the actual document if you wish to see a marriage record that is more recent than 75 years. On the marriage record, you will find the names for each partner's parents, the occupation of each partner AND for at least each father. Mother may have an occupation listed if she continued to work after her children were born. Accessing marriage records always gets you one generation back by providing the information on the parents.

ALWAYS pay attention to the names of the witnesses on the marriage records and to the names of the informants on a death record. You will find these are often family, close friends or neighbours. These people form part of your ancestors social circle. Knowing this information allows you a better understanding of the story and not just of the dates and place names.

Death Records are accessible after 50 years. The death records will list the name of the deceased. Note that Scottish women always retain their maiden name.

In the event of a woman's death, you can search under either her married name or her maiden name and will get the same image. Also on the death record will be the name of the spouse, the place and cause of death. It will also give you some indication of the length of the illness that caused the death.

### ✓ *Record of Corrected Entries (RCE)*

Sometimes when you download a document from ScotlandsPeople, you will see a notation in the left margin that refers to the register of corrected entries. In the margin it tells you that there was a corrected entry made to this document. This means that new information has been provided with regards to the event. At the top, where you are asked about credits, you will see a red button that says: “View RCE” This will cost you another 2 credits. Click on that button, pay the two credits and you will get a new document. This is the image of the page in the registration book that carries the new information.

### ✓ *Regular vs Irregular Marriages*

Can't find your ancestor anywhere in the marriage registers? Are they not in the parish registers for the “calling of the banns”? They may have had an irregular marriage. This wasn't terribly uncommon in Scotland. In order to be considered married, two people simply had to declare themselves as man and wife, generally in front of two witnesses. However, if the witnesses weren't available, that was alright as well as long as the couple identified themselves as married. Of course, the church didn't like irregular marriages for a variety of reasons (morality and finances being the major two), so often they would “catch up” with the couple, who would then be summoned before the Kirk Session to take their penance, pay their fine, marry legally and be on their merry way. Kirk Session records have been digitized but at the moment are only available at Scotland's People Centre in Edinburgh. The hope is that they will appear online in the next year or so.

### ✓ *Scottish Naming Pattern:*

The Scots (and often the Irish as well) had

a very distinctive pattern for naming their offspring. Here is how the Scottish Naming Pattern works:

First Born Son - named for the paternal grandfather

Second Born Son - named for the maternal grandfather

Third Son named for the father - unless he shares a name with one of the grandfathers

Fourth and subsequent sons were often named after father or mother's brothers

First Born Daughter - named for the maternal grandmother

Second Born Daughter - named for the paternal grandmother

Third Daughter - named for the mother - unless she shares a name with one of the grandmothers

Subsequent daughters were generally named for mother or father's sisters

In addition, if one of the first three children died, the next baby born of the same sex was given that name so that the name would live on for future generations. This became a bit of a conundrum for me when I was assisting a family looking for their roots in North Uist. This family had Donald MacDonald, then son Donald MacDonald who died at age 3, so the next born son was Donald MacDonald (so far, so good).

This Donald did not die, but a subsequent son was also named Donald. This time, Donald John MacDonald. Both grandfathers were Donald and each had a living grandson named for him!

It gets even better when every eldest son marries an eldest daughter: Henry marries a Margaret - they have a Henry and a Margaret - that Henry marries a Margaret or Margaret marries a Henry. That's when the “Auld Henry”, “Wee Henry”, “Big Henry” and “Margaret's Henry” all come into play.



### ✓ *Diminutives:*

Now let's add diminutives into the mix. For instance:

Ellen, Helen, and Eleanor are often used interchangeably. For the most part, Ellen is the diminutive of Eleanor. Ellen is the common pronunciation of Helen. Nellie can also be the diminutive for Helen or Eleanor.

Jean and Jane are often used interchangeably. This gets complicated when you have a daughter of each name. Janet is often also referred to as Jane but can also be Jennie or Jessie.

Mary and Marion both often get referred to as May, Mamie or Maisie while Margaret usually goes by Peg or Peggy, but can also be referred to as Maggie or Meg.

Catherine, Kathleen and Kate are generally one and the same.

Isabel and Isabella are one and the same but may also be known as Bella, Belle, Sibby or Tibbie.

Elizabeth rarely is Elizabeth, usually being Betty or Bess, but perhaps also Beth, Lizzie, Elsie or Libby.

For men, the diminutives are also readily used. John may be Ian, Iain, or Jock.

George may be Jordy, Geordy or Dod.

James may be Jamie, Jimmy or Hamish. As the saying goes, "Keep calm and carry on!"

### ✓ *Other Places to Look Online*

- Newspapers – British Newspaper Archive
- Maps – National Library of Scotland
- Trades Directories - FindMyPast
- Ships Lists – FMP/Ancestry
- Emigration/Immigration Records - FMP
- Monumental Inscriptions- Deceased Online

The Gazetteer for Scotland is a great wee website for all sorts of information including historic timelines, descriptions of villages, towns and cities as well as old maps. Have a

look and see what you can learn about your Scottish ancestors.

<http://www.scottish-places.info>

### ✓ *Not Everything Is Online*

Of course, you will get to a point in your research where you can no longer get the information you seek online. That is when it becomes necessary to either travel to Scotland to spend time in the archives or hire a genealogist in Scotland to do the work for you. The Scottish Genealogy Society has a roster of professionals who will assist you in your research, for a fee, of course.

If you get the chance to go to Scotland, and spend time in ScotlandsPeople Centre, you can view documents right up to the present day. These cannot be copied or downloaded, but you can transcribe to your hearts content. This was particularly useful for me in trying to piece together my paternal grandmother's family. I have been researching the Haddows for years. I have connected with several distant cousins who all connect to a single line but then branch off from a different offspring. I became known as the "go to" person for anyone setting out on or who was "stuck" in their Haddow research.

But when I was in Scotland recently, my focus was on a more recent generation. My grandmother and her siblings. I was able to access information that was far more recent than what is available online. I now know their stories, their successes, their challenges, their tragedies. I was able to drive out to the small little village where they lived. I managed to get photos of their headstones. When I returned home, I sat and wrote out the story of the Haddows, at least of this particular generation of Haddows, to share with my cousins. It was such a labour of love being able to share what I had learned. Our granny died when we were

all quite young. Three of us then emigrated to different countries, so lost the connection to the story after Granny passed away. Our fathers weren't much for sharing family stories about their parents or grandparents, so we were all in a bit of a vacuum. Now, however, we are all feeling a lot more connection to the Haddows, thanks to the opportunity to see more recent documents which allowed me to piece their stories together.

### ✓ ***Don't Underestimate Local Resources***

Many of us are familiar with the standard search engines, websites (Scotland's People, Ancestry, GenesReunited) and online resources (Rootsweb, Genuki) but many of us forget to contact the local societies for information relevant to the location where our ancestors resided. Often, the local family history societies will have parish census records, church records, monumental inscriptions, old maps and information related to local businesses, schools and families. A list of Family History Societies can be found through the Scottish Association of Family History Societies:

<http://www.safhs.org.uk/members>

Don't be shy about contacting the local society and asking where to turn next. They may just be the contact you need to help break through a brick wall or two.

### ✓ ***Connecting with Others:***

One of the best things about the Genealogical Community is our penchant for connecting. We all desperately want to connect to our past, to those who came before us, to our ancestors. But we are also very fond of connecting with other genealogists; others searching for their past, their ancestry. Because of this desire to connect, the Genealogy Community is also very helpful. I can't begin to thank those I have connected with

who have furthered my research. Most of them total strangers. People I would not recognize on the street, but whose names I know because of our connection to family history.

A great way to connect with others, especially early on in your research is through message boards. These are parts of websites where you can leave your unanswered questions. This is a great way to find others with the same research interests as you - people looking for the same family members. In order to do so, make sure your title captures the people you are looking for - not long lists of people but something as simple as Haddows of Lanarkshire Scotland. This rules out those with Haddow ancestors who are from the US, England etc and makes the responses more meaningful to you.

Most of us are aware of Ancestry. Personally, I don't find Ancestry terribly helpful - especially for Scottish research. But you can leave a message on the message boards and perhaps find a connection that way. This saves you trawling through hundreds of possible matches in other people's trees with inaccurate information.

Another great message board system is Rootsweb. Rootsweb is free. The responses may take longer but they are generally very helpful. As well, many of the message boards are now linked to the mailing lists, which reach people a whole lot faster.

FamilySearch has a community page for those searching their Scottish Ancestors. It can be found at: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/ScotlandGenealogy>

For connecting with others specifically researching in Scotland, GenesReunited is a fabulous website. I highly recommend joining and uploading your tree. I have found living relatives I never knew existed and the help has been totally amazing. A membership is \$34 annually and every couple of weeks or

so, you will get an e-mail with “hot matches” The software is programmed to look for other trees with the same names and then notify you of the connection. It doesn’t always narrow it down to your specific ancestors, but often it does. You can then connect with the others searching the same family members. This is particularly helpful in the early stages of your research if you are uncertain about where in Scotland your ancestors lived. Once you have this information through your connection with others, it makes your time on ScotlandsPeople far more productive and allows you the most value for your credits.

Another little known site is Curious Fox. You can narrow down your search to your ancestor’s county. You can also see old maps of the area, which can be quite helpful. Take the plunge. Branch out. Connect. You will be pleasantly surprised with the results.



## **COURSE: MEDIEVAL IRELAND 1100 - 1500**

In the Middle Ages, Anglo-Normans conquered and occupied much of Ireland. The English coined the phrase ‘beyond the pale’ which referred to the ways of the ‘barbaric’ Gaels who lived outside the areas of English settlement, typically surrounded by a palisade made with pales (stakes). The 14th century Statutes of Kilkenny were meant to keep new settlers English-speaking under threat of death! Why would the descendents of the Anglo-Normans adopt Gaelic language and law when English kings could forfeit their lands and threaten them with death? Find out in this course.

**Late registration is not a problem.**

More Info: Medieval Ireland  
[www.heartsthroughhistory.com/the-middle-ages-in-ireland](http://www.heartsthroughhistory.com/the-middle-ages-in-ireland)

Sharron Gunn, w/a Sheila Currie, lives in British Columbia,  
and teaches Irish & Scottish History as non-credit university courses.



# So, what's next?

The fantastic growth of the Celtic Guide has been so inspiring. Between hits on the main site, and those on the Facebook page, the numbers continue to climb, as do the number of people who have contributed in one way or another. As you can see, we were pushed out to an unprecedented 48 pages for this issue of Celtic Guide, twice our average size. This may well be one of the most valuable issues of Celtic Guide produced so far.

For September the focus will be on the expanded Celtic Fringe. There are many areas of the world that reflect at least some Celtic heritage and while Ireland and Scotland get most of the press, it is only fair to mention the other places as well. Some examples would be the Isle of Man, Bittany, Cornwall, Wales, the Spanish areas of Galicia, Cantabria and Asturias, the former Eastern European country of Galicia, now part of Poland and the Ukraine, the Turkish area of Galatia, and of course Canada, especially Nova Scotia/Cape Breton, but even beyond to the Yukon and other hot spots of Scottish/Irish settlement.

We may even touch on some U.S. cities, and some additional European cities known for the Celtic roots. There is even evidence of a small Celtic settlement in China!

The goal is simply to identify and tell the short version of the story of these “Lands of the Celtic Fringe.” Once again, our thanks to all who make this possible.

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