

# Celtic Guide

Volume 2, Issue 5 –May 2013

*Celtic  
Vacations*

## *From the Editor*



Our May cover comes to us compliments of photographer David Robertson and is a stunning shot of Bonamargy Friary, located on the rugged north coast of County Antrim, Northern Ireland, just outside the seaside town of Ballycastle. Your CG editor visited this spot a half-dozen or so years ago and even climbed out on an old stone roof of one of the chapels, which was accessed by an intriguing stone spiral staircase. It was all very much like an old romantic movie and, considering that one of the greatest heroes of the Scots in Ulster is buried here, these rocks and gravestones could tell the most exciting of tales if only we could hear them speak.

The friary is a 'Franciscan' foundation established in 1485 by Rory MacQuillan. It is said that the first battle between the warring MacDonnell and MacQuillan clans was fought on nearby land. At the main entrance to the friary is a small, two story gatehouse, which opens into a store and workroom. Well worn steps lead directly to the dormitory above. Traces of an altar can still be found in the adjoining church, and a locked lead vault holds the remains of the celebrated chieftain, Sorley Boy MacDonnell, and other McDonnell leaders. Scattered throughout the cemetery are followers of the Antrim McDonnells, including, no doubt, some members of my own family, as well as other early Scottish-Irish sojourners. This was a main destination of my own Celtic Vacation.

Around 1822 four manuscripts were found in an old oaken chest in the ruins of Bonamargy Friary. One of these manuscripts contained a large portion of one of the principal theological works of Saint Thomas Aquinas, written on vellum in very contracted Latin. The earliest date appearing on it is 1338, and the latest 1380.

It is amazing that so many similar relics of antiquity can be visited in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and other Celtic countries. Kudos to those in government, in public institutions, and in the surrounding neighborhoods who realize the value in protecting these artifacts, structures and sites for all to view, even these many centuries after the fact.

This issue is packed with ideas and information on Celtic Vacations. We feature our second CG interview, this time with a travel agent who specializes in Celtic tours. Many of our regular authors return with their take on our May theme, and we have an abundance of photographs, for – as they say – a picture is worth a thousand words.

The reader is reminded that the Celtic Guide is a product of many volunteers who take time away from their businesses, schooling and careers to contribute meaningful and enjoyable stories. We pride ourselves in an unlimited acceptance of fact and fantasy, history and mystery, as long as all is in good taste and consists of a fully-written and sincere composition.

We are not interested in taking sides, but we are willing to accept articles on all sides of the discussion. A few good examples are that we have published a handful of articles on the origins of the Celtic race, on King Arthur, and again on Robert the Bruce, which have not always agreed with each other. Ours is not the position of referee, but rather the position of enabler. We enjoy all theories and present many different viewpoints, all hovering around each monthly theme.

Life is too short to exclude, to argue, to nitpick. We are about inclusion as long as the rules of good taste and a completed article are met. And so we invite anyone with a Celtic tale to tell to contact us at the email below. We will most likely use your article if it somehow fits into one of our monthly themes. For now, we hope you enjoy the efforts of so many people in bringing you the May issue of the Celtic Guide.

# Ancestral Tourism by Christine Woodcock

Alex Haley once wrote: “In all of us there is a hunger, marrow deep, to know our heritage - to know who we are and where we came from. Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainments in life, there is still a vacuum, an emptiness, and the most disquieting loneliness.”

Discovering who we are seems to be an integral part of the Baby Boomer Generation. The family stories and oral histories that allowed previous generations to know in their souls who they were are not as accessible to current generations.

The Boomer Generation has reached, or is approaching, retirement. They can now dedicate their free time to family history research. For many, they are fast becoming the oldest generation in their respective families and they have an internal drive to ensure that when they are gone, the family legacy and the family memories will live on. Many understand that the best way to truly understand their ancestors is to visit their homeland.

Genealogy vacations are on the rise. People are “heading home” in an effort to discover their heritage. This will have a positive impact on the economy of countries such as Scotland, Ireland and Wales where the history and heritage are rich and where the repositories provide priceless treasures of their own.

Traveling to the home of your ancestors takes planning. It is not enough to show up in the village, head to the local pub and start asking questions. You need to do some research ahead of time.

- Learn about what repositories are available, what archival materials they hold, who can access them and what is required to access them (do you need a “readers ticket” or special card? Do you need photo i.d.? Do you need to provide passport photos so an i.d. card can be created for you?)

- Learn the hours that the repositories are open, whether an appointment or booking time is required and whether there are fees involved.

- Many archival institutions have their holdings off-site and so it is important that you know this and order ahead so that your time can be well spent and disappointment minimized.

- Read up on whether you are allowed to photograph the images, scan the images, download or copy the images.

- Take your laptop or tablet as well as a USB stick to backup digital files.

For anyone traveling to an archival repository, the most important part of their research experience is not just the interaction with the archival documents, but their interaction with the Archivists themselves. The Archivists provide the road map to the archives and the records contained within. It is this person who helps the researcher truly understand the information that can be gleaned from the records.

The Archivist can put the documents into perspective. They can help the researcher know where to look next. And it is the Archivist’s enthusiasm and passion for what they do that puts the passion and enthusiasm into the researcher him/herself. ***It sparks the learning, and quells the yearning.*** This is particularly important for those traveling to archives where the information you are seeking is not yet readily available online, such as Ireland or Wales.

Since you are likely going to be traveling several hundred or even several thousand miles, take the time to create an itinerary. You will quickly tire of spending all of your days in libraries, archives, or genealogy societies reading records. As exciting as the finds will be, make sure you take the time to assimilate



the information you have uncovered. Plan for a night in to read through the information once again and to see how it all fits into what you already know. Break up your week by planning some sight seeing – even if only to the cemetery of your ancestors.

If you can, try to immerse yourself in the social history and culture of you ancestral homeland. Enjoy a meal in a pub, take in a ceilidh, and try ethnic foods. Take the time to walk the streets of the city or village to gain a better sense of where you belong. Visit museums that specialize in social history to gain a better sense of the times in which your ancestors lived.

If you decide to travel to your Celtic homeland to do genealogy research, be careful in the plans you make. Many countries will run “ancestral” tours. These are travel companies, not genealogy companies and you won’t get the access to and assistance at the repositories to make your trip what you hope it to be. If you are traveling to the Isle of Man, Cornwall or Brittany, hire yourself a genealogist who is an expert in those records and work out a research plan with them. You can access these experts through local genealogy societies:

Isle of Man <http://www.iomfhs.im/>

Cornwall <http://www.cornwallfhs.com/>

Brittany <http://www.bretagne-genealogie.org/indexeng.htm>

If you would like to travel with an organized group whose purpose is genealogy research, my company, Genealogy Tours of Scotland, takes groups to Scotland every spring to research in the repositories in Edinburgh, including the Scotland’s People Centre, the National Library of Scotland and the Scottish Genealogy Society. I also make arrangements for you to visit the family history society in your ancestral part of Scotland. More information can be found at <http://www.genealogytourofscotland.ca/>

These organized trips allow you to get access to records that are not available online and allow

you protected time at the various repositories where you can get professional help from the local archivists. Many of these places know in advance that the groups are coming and so allow for extra staffing.

A trip to your ancestral homeland is both awe-inspiring and humbling. It provides you with such a deep seated feeling of reverence knowing you stand in the same place where your ancestors walked. The sights, some of the landmarks and the sounds may have changed, but the deep emotion of knowing your great, great anything once stood in the same spot you are now standing in, or worshipped in the same church you are visiting is incomparable. It helps you put the dates, names and places into perspective. It breathes life into the documents. And as always, it makes you want to know more.



*An ancient drawing of Brittany to whet your whistle.*

# Henceforth Tales

by Cass and Deborah Wright

## MacCulloch

From the glens of Scotland, to the coastline of the Maritimes, to the ranches of Australia, the elders of this clan often swear that their family name has more beginnings than most pods have peas. Commonly, it is believed the lands surrounding the district of Benderloch once belonged to Modan, the head of the MacLullichs, as indicated in the local phrase, *clann Lulich o thulaich Mhaodain*, or: “the MacLullichs from the hill of Modan”.

Lullach is well-remembered as the stepson of the infamous Macbeth, and ruled briefly as King of the Scots until killed by Malcolm III. Lullach was the natural son of the Mormaer of Angus and was married to the daughter of the Mormaer of Moray; his son, once grown, would have been styled “Mac-Lullach”.

Alternatively, when Robert the Bruce knighted Captain Cullo O’Neil in 1307, choosing him to be his standard-bearer, he also gifted him lands in Lorn, Myreton and Achawan. Sir Cullo, who died in 1331, left his estate and lands in Galloway to his elder son Godfrey, who assumed the surname of “MacCullo” - thereby, over time, generating MacCullochs who broadly settled lands overlooking Luce Bay, on the southwest coast of Scotland.

Other branches were established in Easter Ross, where they were followers, first, of the Earl of Ross, and then, in 1493, of the Munroes - in whose cause they suffered near oblivion at the battle of ‘*Druim-a-chait*’. Those families had considerable tenure of lands around Tain, a town where they

were widely known to hold the nearly hereditary post of Provost.

Still other theories contend the MacCullochs descend from Ulgric, grandson of Owen Gallvus, a king of the Strathclyde Britons. Ulgric was killed in 1138, leading the gallant but wild Gallovidians for King David, at the Battle of the Standards. Ulgric and Douvenald were viceroys of Galloway - the MacCullochs, the Mackuloghs and the Culaghs holding sway over the lands of Ulgric, while the McDowalls governed those of Douvenald.

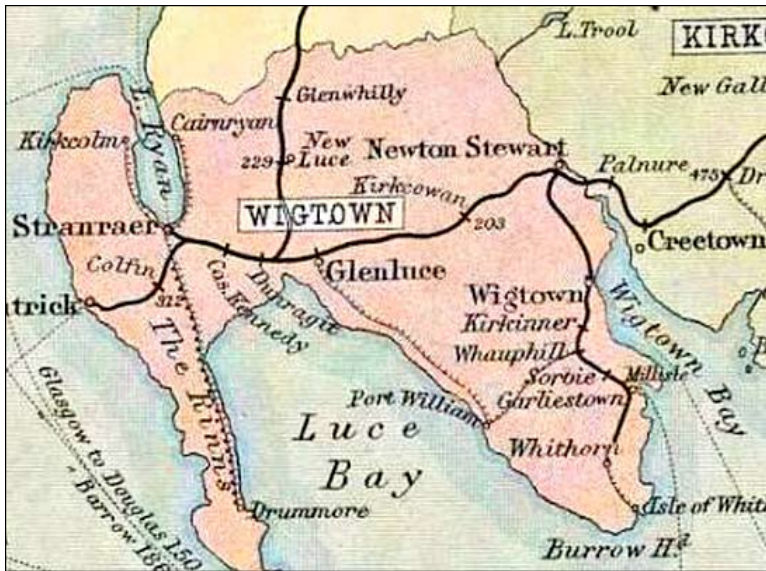
Equally possible, the name McCulloch might derive from a warrior of earlier times, Gwallawc, or “The Hawk of Battle”, a Gallovidian chieftain from the 7th century, whose deeds were sung by ancient bards, and was reputedly buried beneath the Standing Stones of Torhouse; his sons took the name MacGwallawc.

One can also find legends claiming the Clan came down from a knight of the Crusades who bore the device of a wild boar - in Gaelic, a cullach - on his shield, and so distinguished himself in the Holy Land with his gallantry, that



*MacCulloch Shield on Galloway District Tartan*





revenge for a raid on his hometown of Kirkcudbright, was reported as having “ravaged the Isle of Man”, which was owned at that time by the Earl of Derby. Cardoness Castle, which was built in the 1470s, and Killraser Castle, built later in nearby Ardwell, were both seats of the MacCullochs of Myreton, and were of alternating importance during the 16th century. Myreton Castle was another seat of the Clan, originally built in the mid-1500’s on the site of a 12th-century motte, but sold to the Maxwells in 1685. All three keeps

he became known as “the Cullach”. Upon his return, William the Lion rewarded his martial deeds by granting him lands and holdings in Killasser and Auchtnaucht. The grateful warrior adopted the formal surname of Cullach, and his son, Godfrey, named after a fellow Knight Templar, was popularly known as Mac-Cullach (son of Cullach).

From wherever it derives, the surname first appears in Scottish records in 1296, when Thomas Maculagh, Count of Wyggtone (now Wigtown) rendered homage to Edward I on the document we call the Ragman Roll. His family later held castles at Gatehouse of Fleet in Kirkcudbright, in Creetown and in Port William. Thomas Macculagh’s seal bears a squirrel and the name: S’Thome Macculi. He is also likely the man recorded in 1305 as Thomas Makhulagh, Sheriff of Wigtown.

In 1354, Patrick McCoulagh and Gilbert McCoulaghe were charter witnesses in Galloway. In 1360, Sir Patrick Macologhe had an annuity of 100 marks in recompense for “loss of his lands”; in 1363, this same man, now recorded as Sir Patrick M’Owlache, was granted a restoration of lands.

In 1488, Sheriff Quinton Agnew was ordered to remit to Archibald MacCullagh, 28 oxen, 88 sheep and four horses. In 1507, a man described only as “the McCulloch chief”, in seeking

now lie in ruins.

In 1612, John MacCulloch, Provost of Tain, acquired the lands of Kindeace from Munro of Culnald. The Clan held other lands in Easter Ross, including Mulderg and Easter Drumm, from the time of 1649. They also inhabited lands in the west of Argyll, in the vicinity of Oban and the Isle of Kerrara, where MacCulloch of Colgin was known as an elder of his line, claiming descent from the MacLulichs of Benderloch under the patronage of the MacDougalls, having likely served them as foresters and rangers, as did the neighboring MacIntyres, in the Lands of Lorn.

Frequently, the MacCullochs were allied with other, more populous clans, such as the Rosses, the MacDonalds of Sleat, and the Gunns, under the variant of “MacCullie”. They were closely associated as well with the Galloway District, as were the MacDowells, a regional sept of Clan MacDougall.

During Scotland’s War of the Covenant, it was widely rumored that several MacCulloch chieftains had trained their falcons to prey upon courier pigeons, thus to intercept Royalist intelligence for the Covenanter forces, although many now contend that such was questionable, given the Clan’s tradition of frequent service to numerous Catholic and Episcopal bishops and canons.

Few were left to wonder about their sentiment toward the House of Orange, though, when in 1691, an enterprising innkeeper in Ayrshire named Marten M'Culloch lauded the attraction of a huge hog, which had been christened "King William", who, summoned with a tin bugle, could be viewed wearing his purple "cape" tied to his back, and fed apples by any visitor to the roadside hostelry for a fee of two pence apiece. Reportedly, the swine's celebrity was such among the coach road travelers that news of it soon carried far and wide; but when a bailiff eventually arrived from Stirling to investigate for the Crown Court, no evidence of the alleged mockery could be found, aside from a suspicious quantity of fresh pork hanging in the tavern's larder.

In Edinburgh in 1697, a certain Godfrey McCulloch was convicted and executed for the murder of one William Gordon, and though few historians doubt his guilt, they are divided on the possibility of the political motivations that might have been involved.

In modern times, despite the achievements of Major General Sir Andrew McCulloch of Ardwall, who was not only a decorated hero of two wars, but also an aide-de-camp to HRH George V, and American machinist Robert P. McCulloch's development of the world's

first one-man chainsaw in 1948, and the on-going, international popularity of historian and bestselling author David McCullough, this Clan has, currently, neither a chief, nor, yet, an official MacCulloch tartan.

In light thereof, MacCulloch descendants seeking a correct and acceptable tartan to wear may choose from those claimed by MacDougall, or Ross, or optionally, that of the District of Galloway, where their family name is among the most ancient.

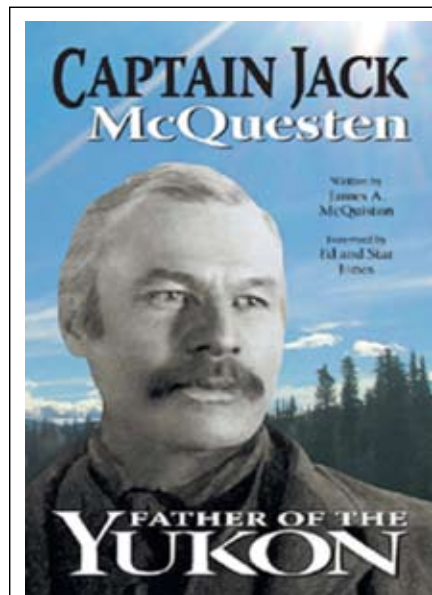
Unique to themselves, though, is the Clan's rousing motto: *Vi Et Animo*, which translates as "Life and Action" . . . and the MacCulloch crest of a fist clenching a lethally barbed hunting dart certainly speaks for itself!

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

## Henceforth Tales

by Cass and Deborah Wright

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



## Celts in the Yukon?

People of Celtic blood played some of the more substantial roles in exploring the Yukon River Valley. Many place names, from the Stewart, Mackenzie and Fraser Rivers, to the towns of Mayo, McQuesten and McGrath, to the Ogilvie Mountains, the Muir Glaciers, Forts McPherson and Fort Selkirk, all testify to the significance of Celtic explorers in the early days of this region.

In his book *Father of the Yukon*, Celtic Guide publisher, Jim McQuiston, presents some great history of the only person ever to be named Father of Alaska or Father of the Yukon, along with substantial information on the 25 years BEFORE the Klondike gold rush. His book on Captain Jack is available on amazon.com and other book sites, with more info at

<http://www.fatheroftheyukon.com>.





**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Cameron Morrison is not new to Celtic Guide pages, as we have published many of his great photos of Scotland in the past. However, this is his first written article and is accompanied by some wonderful photography as well.

Knock Castle is a four-story ruin, dating from approximately 1600. The rectangular keep strongly resembles that of a Borders pele tower, and measures about 27 feet (8.2 m) by 22 feet (6.7 m), with walls of about 4 feet (1.2 m) thick. The external walls of the castle survive intact, although the tower is roofless. An unusual feature at Knock are the defensive shot holes, for pistols, under each of the numerous windows, all of these having a defensive grate protecting them. The shot holes are angled to the ground, with the centre one pointing forward and the two outer holes pointing slightly askew.

The inside of the tower is entirely ruined, but the remains of a vaulted basement, used as a kitchen, and a spiral turnpike staircase can still

be seen. At the top of the stair a lookout turret or cap house is still visible.

The foundations of an enclosing courtyard wall are still visible. The strong wooden door, protected by an iron yett, opened on to the north side of the surrounding courtyard. Various out buildings, including a brewery, stables, or bake house, for example, would have been set around the perimeter wall.

A short distance to the west is a motte, or mound, with the possible foundations of a 12th century timber stronghold, known as the Old Castle Knock. Belonging to the Earls of Mar, this structure was destroyed in 1590 by the Clan Chattan (Macintosh). What little remains of the site appears to have evidence of a corn-drying kiln within.

Knock Castle was granted to the Gordons of Abergeldie by the 4th Earl of Huntly, after the battle of Corrichie. Fought on the 28 October 1562, the Gordons were defeated by the forces of Mary, Queen of Scots during her suppression of the rebellious Huntly.



## Craig of the Knock

A feud between the neighbouring clan, the Forbes, intensified when Henry Gordon, the 2nd Laird of Knock, was murdered during a raid by the Forbes and Clan Chattan men. His brother Alexander Gordon succeeded Henry. It is reported that one day, when Alexander sent his seven sons out to cut peat for the winter store, the brothers are said to have strayed onto the Forbes Clan lands, and after several hours cutting were discovered by the Forbes and his men. A battle ensued, by the end of which all the brothers were killed. After the affray the Forbes decided to make an example of the Gordons. They severed the heads of the brothers and impaled them on their peat spades. After a while, concerned about the whereabouts of his sons, the Laird sent out one of his servants, with a meal for the boys, to look for them. When the boy's heads were discovered the servant, distraught, ran back to Knock with the news of what had transpired that day. Upon hearing the news, Alexander Gordon collapsed at the top of



the turnpike stair and tumbled to his death. The Forbes Laird was then taken and executed, and all his lands were forfeited to Abergeldie.







## Getting to Knock Castle

There is more than one Knock Castle, including a ruin out on the Isle of Skye not to be confused with the one written about here.

The Knock Castle shown in these photos is located near Ballater in Royal Deeside, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

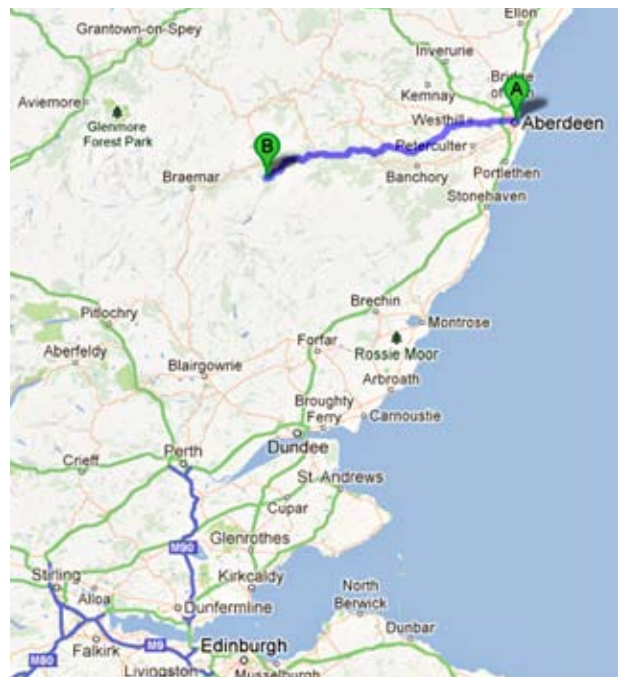
Ballater is located west of Aberdeen about an hour and a half. You leave the city via the A944 and essentially follow the highways that run along the Dee River.

The castle sits in a strong position on a knoll in a field on the south side of Craig of the Knock, at the entrance to Glen Muick.

It is located about 1 mile (1.6 km) west of the town of Ballater, and about 6 miles (9.7 km) east of Balmoral, just off the A93. The castle is in the care of Historic Scotland.

I'd advise any visitor not to go while the Queen is at Balmoral as its right on the edge

of the estate and the Metropolitan police who guard the Queen may not like seeing you there.







# The ORKNEY ISLANDS

by Carolyn Emerick

*Let me take you down,  
cause we're goin' to... Skara Brae!*

The Islands of Orkney are a mystical place steeped in history and legend. Like the rest of the British Isles, Orkney is an amalgam of influences. The ancients left their mark from pre-history with their standing stones and neolithic settlements. Then came the Picts, however they remain even more of a mystery as the Picts left very little evidence of their existence in Orkney behind. So scarce is the evidence, in fact, that until recently scholars questioned whether they were there at all. It was the Vikings that left their stamp on Orkney so strongly that their influence can be found in the culture to this day.

The Vikings first began settling Orkney in the late eighth century. From the records available, we can only speculate what happened to the Picts who had been living on the Islands prior to Viking settlement. Due to Pictish tools being found in Viking settlement excavations, it is thought that some Picts remained on the Islands after the Viking conquest.

Whether they intermarried and assimilated, or whether the majority disappeared, while a few remained as slaves, is unknown. Genocide has been suggested. As has abandonment of Orkney by the Picts to join their Scottish mainland cousins. However, some have wondered about the relations between the Picts of Orkney and mainland Picts and Gaels, and if the Vikings were not welcomed by the Picts of Orkney due to conflict with their mainland cousins.

In any case, there is some evidence to suggest that Pictish society was already on the

decline prior to the Viking invasion. Why it was declining is yet another mystery. It would appear that either the Picts required the aid of Vikings, or that their situation left them wide open for a foreign invader to move in.

What is known, is that the Viking settlement of Orkney was so complete that virtually no place names of Pictish origin survive. In the rest of Britain, place names can be used to show the mixed heritage and influence of the various settlers, from Celt to Roman, and especially the Germanic settlers such as the Angles, Saxons, Danes, and so forth.

*The Orkney Islands are shown in Red with the Shetland Islands off to the upper right in this wikimedia image credited to user TUBS*



However, Orkney, like its neighbor Shetland, was removed from much of the ongoings of

mainland Scotland and the broader Britain, so much so that the main language of its inhabitants for many hundreds of years was not English or Gaelic, but Norn, an old Norse language. This may seem obvious, since it was the language of the Viking settlers. However, in some other areas of Viking settlement, Normandy and Lombardy for example, Vikings assimilated into their new environment and eventually took on the language and customs of the region. Orkney, however, remained a subsidiary of Norway.

Despite such close proximity to Scotland, Orkney did not pass to Scottish dominion until the 15th century.

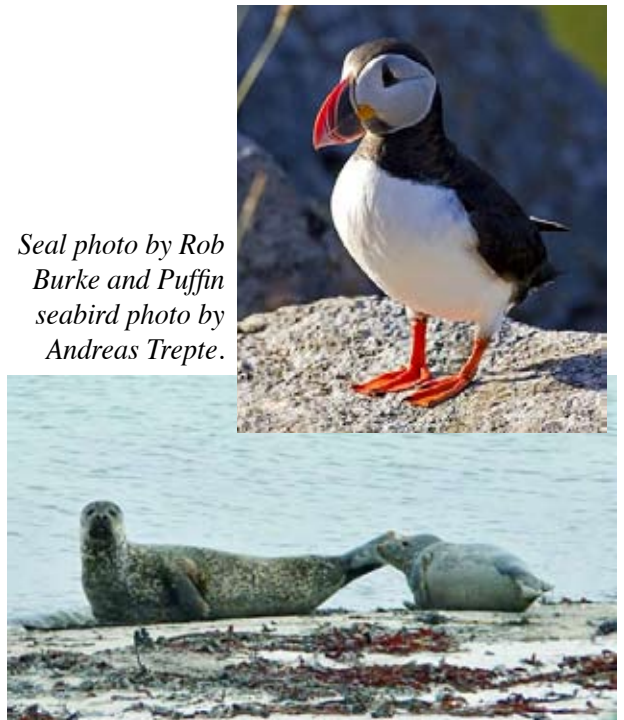
The Islands of Orkney and Shetland both passed to Scotland together. By the 15th century, Norway had become unified with Denmark. The King of Scotland, James III, was to be married to the daughter of King Christian I of Denmark, Princess Margaret. Orkney and Shetland were put up as collateral for the dowry. When the dowry was never paid, both archipelagos passed to the Scottish crown. From that point on, the Scots language found its way into Orkney, while Norn slowly faded away. And today, of course, English is spoken alongside Scots.



If planning a visit to Orkney, there is much to see. The entire archipelago is virtually a natural wonder itself. There are steep cliffs against the ocean side, beautiful seascapes, and wildlife everywhere you look. Along the shores of Orkney, grey and common seals are often seen sunbathing.

Other marine life such as whales, dolphins, and otters make their homes in the surrounding waters. And to be sure, there is an abundance of seabirds, such as the much beloved Puffin.

*Seal photo by Rob Burke and Puffin seabird photo by Andreas Trepte.*

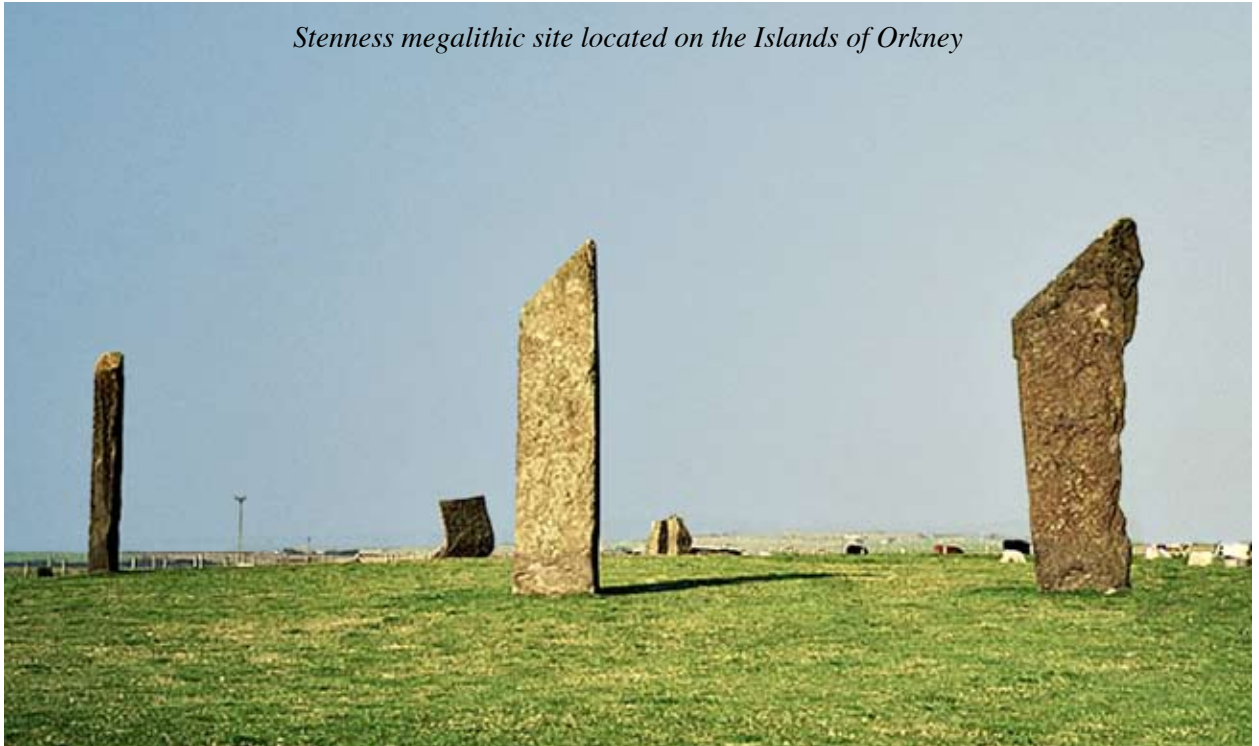


Beyond the wildlife, Orkney is home to many treasures of pre-history and the Iron Age. One place of interest is known as the “Heart of Neolithic Orkney.” It is a UNESCO World Heritage site and consists of multiple neolithic monuments found on main island of Orkney. Within this so called “Heart” are four unique sites; Maeshowe, the Standing Stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar, and Skara Brae.

Maeshowe is an ancient chamber tomb, one of the best preserved in Northern Europe. It is over 5,000 years old, and may have a link to the Newgrange tomb in Ireland. Nearby are the Standing Stones of Stenness. Originally an ellipse, only four stones remain in tact.



*Stenness megalithic site located on the Islands of Orkney*



This site has been referred to as a “Temple of the Moon” in the past, however that title seems to have originated with 19th century Romanticism more than any legitimate historical theories.

Despite this, the Stenness site does give one a sense of romance and magic, as we wonder what its original use would have been.

Due to the Norse settlement of Orkney, the Stenness site began to be affiliated with the Norse pagan gods. Obviously this is a much later attribution, but none the less very real and meaningful to the local people. One stone in particular bore this connection. It was called the Odin Stone, or in the local tongue “Stone o’ Odin.” This stone was highly revered by the local people, and stood for thousands of years. It was a large, imposing stone with a “socket hole”, indicating it may have once been part of a pair. Unfortunately, land surveyors and businessmen from mainland Scotland with more concern for profit than culture moved in to the area and launched assaults on local treasures. Captain W. Mackay is the landowner said to be responsible for the destruction of the Odin Stone as well as other stones on the Stenness site, in 1814.

*A Drawing of the Ancient Odin Stone*



*The Ring of Brodgar (credit to user Chmee2 of Wikimedia commons)*



The Ring of Brodgar, however, is more in tact. It was built in a true circle, such as is found at Stonehenge and Avebury. Although the stones are much smaller than the stones found at Stenness, enough of them remain to give a more full impression of the imposing beauty of these ancient neolithic circles.

You will definitely want to reserve a large portion of your day for the world's best preserved Neolithic village, right here on Orkney, at Skara Brae.

The settlement consists of eight houses, which have been so remarkably preserved as to be called "The Pompeii of Scotland."



*Skara Brae*



Ironically, the site was discovered due to a devastating storm. The village was buried in a mound previously called “Skerrabra”, when high winds began to erode some of the covering during the winter of 1850. The site has been an area of local interest ever since.

There is so much to cover on such a tiny island, I wish this article could go on forever! If you enjoyed this little bit of historical background on Orkney, stay tuned for future articles. I plan on spending the entire summer wandering through not only Orkney, but also Shetland. And, if time allows, possibly the Faroe Islands as well! And if all goes as planned, it will be compiled into my debut book. So wish me luck! And if you'll have me, I'd love to continue to be your tour guide through these beautiful and fascinating islands all summer long.

A Web-Bibliography for further reading:

**<http://www.orkneyjar.com>** - An excellent web site with a wealth of information on Orkney history and heritage

**<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/514>** - UNESCO's website on the World Heritage site at Orkney

**<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk>** - The Scottish Government's historical body, which oversees national historical sites.

**<http://orcadianwildlife.co.uk/>** - A member of Wild Scotland, dedicated to the wildlife of Orkney

**<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orkney>** - Criticism of Wikipedia be damned! It's an excellent jumping off point, it goes into great detail with Orkney, and provides links for further research.



*Both Skara Brae photos credited to Wknight94 of Wikimedia Commons*

by James McQuiston  
with Kathy Harrigan

# Celtic Vacations

## *Our second Celtic Guide Interview!*

For May we thought it would be nice to bring you an interview with a travel agent who specializes in Celtic Vacations. Her name is Kathy Harrigan – how's that for an Irish name?

**CG: “Harrigan Holidays”. . . that sounds almost like a synonym for Celtic Vacations. What made you decide to go into the travel business?**

Yes, Harrigan Holidays is a catchy name for Celtic Vacations. My husband is 100% Irish-American, and I am a mix of Scottish, Irish, English, and German background.

I have been interested in the travel business since high school but life happens and sometimes it takes longer than you hope to do what you want. I first got started when I worked at a school and helped plan their field trips. The principal suggested that I think about doing travel bookings for a living so I took classes and went on from there. The principal of that school was my first client and he and his family still contact me for vacations.

**CG: And so why did you choose Celtic countries like Ireland and Scotland as your principal tours?**

Like everyone else I fell absolutely in love with those countries. One visit and you are hooked . . . and they advise you to ‘sell what you know and love.’ It's so easy to get immersed in the culture and the people. It's also a great first time European trip because you do not have the language barrier that you might have in other countries – except if you are trying to understand a County Cork accent!

**CG: As someone prepares to travel to any one of these Celtic nations, what are some of your best suggestions for how to pack, what items are most important to bring, and, perhaps most importantly, how to most easily understand the monetary exchange?**

The biggest questions I get are – What is the best time to go? and What is the weather like?

There is something wonderful about each season. Winters can be tough though depending on the area so I don't recommend winter. I was in Dublin in January of 2012 and the daffodils were blooming, but this winter has been pretty rough. Always plan on rain and be pleasantly surprised if you have sun! Dress in layers and take a pair of waterproof shoes.

Monetary exchange can be a bit tricky and everyone has their own thoughts. I recommend people use the ATMs in larger cities to withdraw the local currency. You get the best exchange rate that way, even though your bank will charge you a currency conversion fee. I always advise people to contact their local bank and credit card company in advance to – 1) check what the conversion fee is, and 2) let them know you will be out of the country using your card.

It would be awful to be out of the country with no money. Also, I find that a lot of places no longer accept traveler's checks, or there is a high fee to convert them.

**CG: Is there a tour that just seems to be the most popular or most “Celtic” of all the tours you offer?**

There are no specific tours that stand out. If someone has the opportunity to do a custom



planned tour I find that they are a more personal experience and usually include some off-the-beaten-track activities or sights. I do advise if someone is booking a group tour to work with a knowledgeable person when selecting your trip.

For example, you may be planning to stay a few days in Dublin, Galway, Edinburgh etc. and the tour you are looking at might put you in a hotel outside of the town. If you plan to spend time in that town you might want to look at another tour that has a more centrally located hotel so you don't have to take the bus or a cab to the city.

**CG: We've been to Ireland and Scotland and one of the biggest surprises is learning how to drive on the opposite side of the road. Are there tips for Americans on playing it safe while learning that new method of driving?**

I have had clients practice driving on the "wrong" side of the road but I really don't think it matters since the car is really not the same. I suggest clients to not plan to travel too far the first day they have their car so they can get comfortable before setting off on a four hour drive. Also, when you pick up your rental take pictures of your car if you find any damage before you take it. It is also less expensive to rent the car from home rather than walk into the airport car rental and pick one up there.

**CG: I suspect one shouldn't to lease a stick shift to further complicate the issue?**

I definitely recommend an automatic and full insurance when renting.

**CG: Which do you recommend most often - train travel, car rental, or bus tours?**

Train travel is pretty limited. It's great if you want to take a short adventure but it's really not like the train travel the Italy, Germany, and most of Europe. I recommend a bus tour for the first

time visitor especially. I had a client this year who was on a bus tour for part of Ireland then rented a car for the second part of the trip. He said it worked great.

If you rent a car, a GPS is a must. It might not be right but it's some guidance on the roads that are not very well marked. If you do not want a bus tour or to drive yourself, a chauffeur driven tour is wonderful. You have the flexibility of self-drive but you have a built in tour guide to do the driving for you. These work very nicely for families or small groups of five or more.

**CG: How can our readers get in contact with you if they have more questions?**

Kathy Harrigan, CTA  
Harrigan Holidays, LLC  
717.818.3024  
kathy@harriganholidays.com  
www.HarriganHolidays.com

**CG: Can you take us through what might be a sample tour, including some photographs of places your tours have visited?**

Yes. I have some great photos of Ireland. I do not travel with all of my groups so I wish I had more photos of Scotland. I have tons of great photos of Ireland, though.

I am escorting a garden group to Scotland and Northern/England this summer so I hope to take more photos of out-of-the-way places in Scotland and England.

My tours are great for clubs, churches, garden clubs, etc. Garden tours have surpassed golf vacations in Ireland and they are well on their way to doing the same in Scotland. A group can take a garden tour, religious tour, literary tour, golf tour, pub/music tour, agricultural tour, genealogy tour, any personalized tour for you and your group of friends.

On the following page are photographs of some of the places we visited on a recent tour to Ireland.



### **Dillon's Gardens - Dublin, Ireland**

This is a photo of part of the garden at the home of the renowned Helen Dillon. This tour group was very fortunate that Helen was there the day they visited. She personally answered questions and was very gracious. Her staff served tea and cookies while her husband gave a small tour of the house and told of it's history.



### **Dairy Farm in County Cork**

This photograph is from our visit to Tim O'Leary's farm in County Cork. The group was able to learn about the Kerrygold, which is the Irish Dairy Coop. This was one of the highlights on this group tour, especially with the rolling green hills of Ireland providing such a beautiful backdrop to the visit.



Of course there's nothing like a visit to poet W.B. Yeats's grave located at Drumcliff, County Sligo.

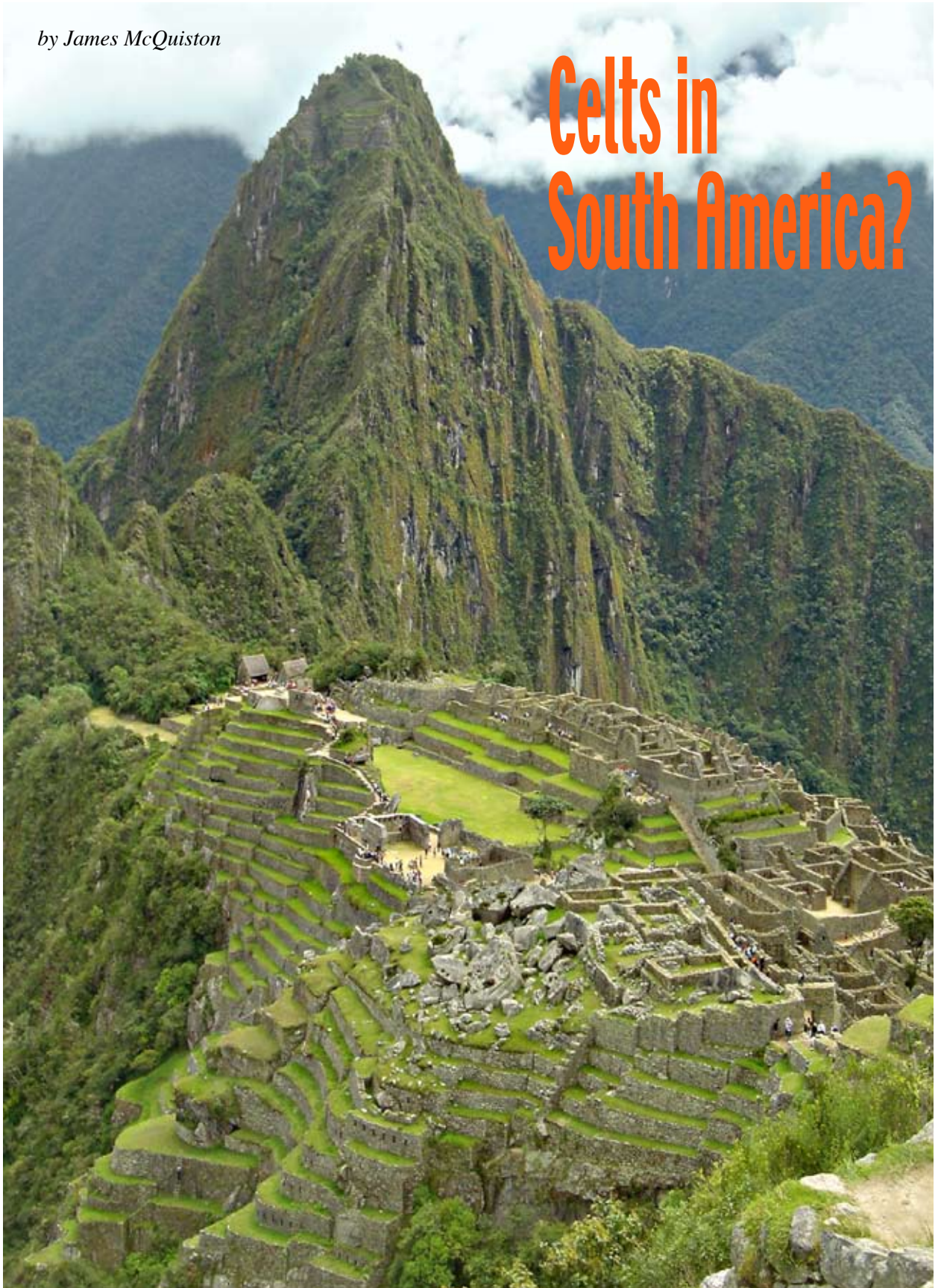
Finally, how about a visit to the Burren Perfumery, Ireland's oldest working perfumery, located in the heart of the Burren, County Clare, Ireland? It has been around for 40 years but you cannot visit if you are on a large coach. They featured amazing scones in their cafe.





*by James McQuiston*

# Celts in South America?



The photo of Machu Picchu, one of the Wonders of the World, was taken several hundred feet above the site, with my iPhone, after arising at 4:30 AM to make the bus trip to this ancient Inca site.

Before leaving for Peru just last month (April 2013) I was told that there might be a Celtic connection to this wonder. I have yet to prove that connection but I did learn a lot about the possibility of Celts in South America long before Columbus's voyage, as well as the presence of other cultures, and I also learned a little bit more about the mysteries behind the moving of, and building with large stones.

If you asked me whether I would recommend this vacation (Celtic or not) I would have to say it is not for the faint of heart or weak of body. The altitude (up to 12,000 feet in the staging town of Cusco) and the hundreds of steps, most much higher than any U.S. law would allow, make it a rigorous challenge.

There has been much controversy over visits to this site as it is in pretty much the same condition as it has been for hundreds of years, despite efforts to add a tramway up to the site, an exclusive hotel nearby, and even helicopter rides over the area. There is currently a no-fly zone over Machu Picchu and various restrictions are imposed, sometimes based on weather conditions.

This site is very remote and remained undiscovered by the western world from the mid 1500s to the late 1800s. The year 1911 is often given as the discovery year of Machu Picchu although it appears on older maps and it is thought very small groups traveled there, often walking off with valuable artifacts of the Inca world. By the way, it is not accurate to call the people who lived here Incas. An Inca was a king of these people, not the people themselves. Still it is often referred to as the Inca civilization, which serves the purpose of distinguishing it from the Aztec or Mayan civilizations, or the multitude of other civilizations that populated early South America.

The Aztecs existed about the same time as the Inca – as part of 'Mesoamerica' from the 14th to 16th centuries. They populated much of central Mexico whereas the Inca culture spread far beyond the borders of present day Peru to command a very large chunk of South America. The Mayans came much earlier, with the height of their civilization about 250-90 A.D.

There is one other lesser known culture that peaks our interest of which we will soon speak.

First, it must be said that many links from one civilization to another can be less than solid, and yet life and the history of humankind does not generally happen in a vacuum. There are bits of evidence all over the world connecting one ancient culture with another, through trade, through war, and through exploration.

There are many theories about European visitors to the Americas long before Columbus 'discovered' America. In fact, ruins of a Viking settlement in Newfoundland absolutely prove the Norse were here long before Columbus. Recent research on graves found in Greenland seems to show that early settlers there had more Celtic blood than Viking blood.

We have covered some of the legends of early travel to America in past issues of the Guide, and will refer to some of these as this article progresses. For some in-your-face proof of early white races in South America we need look only at the writings of the earliest Spanish conquistadors who described many of the people they met as being fair-skinned and tall.

We need look no further than the famous Fuentes Bowl, found at Lake Titicaca, which is just south of Cusco, Peru, and southeast of Machu Picchu.

This bowl's existence was discovered by the western world about 1960. The writing on the bowl appears to be cuneiform in nature and very similar to alphabets used in Sumeria and Lybia from up to 5,000 years ago. In fact, it has been roughly translated using known cuneiform examples from these cultures. The question is – Where did it come from?



We also need look no further than excavated gravesites in South America said to hold the remains of fair-skinned people with red/blond hair, or the still-existing groups of fairer-skinned South Americans with red or blond hair.

Again, we need look no further than the Inca legends that say the founders of their culture were tall, fair-skinned individuals. If these people were taller back then it would explain why the steps at most of these ruins are about 10-12 inches high. Why make it so hard to get around when stone steps could be of any height?

One legend says that many centuries ago a group escaping the encroaching Roman Empire left Europe, and included some Celts possibly from the Galicia region of Portugal. This group is said to have sailed down the coast of Africa and then across to South America, possibly landing in present day Brazil.

Brazil has its own Celtic legend in that many old Irish legends talk of a land to the west of Ireland called Bresil, or Hy Brazil. It was named after Bres, the son of Ériu whose father was a Formorian sea god, Elatha. Some think it was simply a now-sunken island off the UK coastline. Others think it may be the Brazil of South America.

According to one source, Hy Brazil was discovered by Saint Brendan. The island appeared out in the Atlantic, to the west of Ireland, in charts as early as 1325, as well as in the famous Catalan Atlas dated 1375 and, subsequently, on numerous maps for the next 200 years, including Waldseemüller's map of the British Isles, issued at Strassburg in 1513, and on its later editions.

It was also shown on Toscanelli's chart dated about 1457, which was said to have been used by Christopher Columbus on his first voyage in 1492. This is very significant as it indicates that if Brazil was known to Columbus, then it would almost certainly have been known to Pedro Alvares Cabral (1460-1526) who "discovered" Brazil in 1500. Some writers believe that the Cabral family in Portugal came originally from Galicia, from one of two towns of that name,

and that they arrived in Portugal very early, presumably before the Islamic conquest of the Iberian peninsula.

According to *The Island of Brazil*, a contemporary account written by William of Worcester (and published in the late 18th century), when word of a "new land to the west" reached Bristol, England, in the late 1470s this was presumed to be Brazil. In 1480, a Bristol merchant John Jay outfitted at great expense an 80-ton ship to sail to the island of Brazil, described as "a name often given in medieval European tales to a land far to the west of Ireland". Setting sail in July 1480 from Bristol, Jay's ship voyaged west, intending to "traverse the seas." But the journey ended in failure. English crews had yet to master the new methods of astronomical navigation devised in Portugal and Spain: open, oceanic voyaging - as opposed to island hopping by way of Iceland and Greenland.

Even with all these possible connections to Ireland and Galicia, there is still earlier evidence of fair-skinned races in South America including the Fuentes Bowl and the very legends of the Inca civilization.

The one culture that may provide the best clue is that of the Chachapoyas, also called the Warriors of the Clouds, who were an Andean people living in the cloud forests of the Amazonas Region of present-day Peru. They were conquered by the Incas shortly before the Spanish arrival. This name was given to this culture by the Inca; the name that these people may have actually used to refer to themselves is not known. The meaning of the word Chachapoyas may have been derived from *sacha-p-collas*, the equivalent of "colla people who live in the woods."

It would do to remind the reader of the three Colla brothers of Irish Dalriada who helped settled the "scotti" in Ireland, and also of the legendary Irish name of Macha, quite similar to Machu. Many Scottish and some English kings and queens traced their bloodline back to Colla Uais, one of the three Irish Colla brothers.

Many Highland clans claim descent from Clan Colla, so to find this word in Peru also describing a clan of people is quite remarkable, and perhaps not coincidental. Also quite remarkable, Armagh in Ireland is from the Irish *Ard Mhacha* meaning “Macha’s height.” Machu Picchu means “Wise Mountain.”

Macha was a goddess in Celtic literature and another specific Macha, Macha Mong Rúad, daughter of Áed Rúad, was, according to both medieval legend and historical tradition, the only queen in the List of High Kings of Ireland.

In both instances these names, in Ireland and in Peru, refer to a high place, and to a person or the personification of leadership and wisdom.

Perhaps it is coincidental again, but maybe, with all the clues being gathered, one day there will be accepted, irrefutable proof that Celts visited, and in fact settled in Peru long before Columbus ‘discovered’ America.

The Chachapoyas were a fair-skinned race as described by both the Inca culture and by Spanish conquistadors. Cieza de León, writing in 1553, in his chronicles of Peru, remarked that, among the indigenous Peruvians, the Chachapoyas were unusually fair-skinned and famously beautiful – “They are the whitest and most handsome of all the people that I have seen in Indies, and their wives were so beautiful that because of their gentleness, many of them deserved to be the Incas’ wives and to also be taken to the Sun Temple (located at Machu Picchu). The women and their husbands always dressed in woolen clothes and in their heads they wear their llautos, which are a sign they wear to be known everywhere.”

Inca legends say that their founders came from Lake Titicaca, the same area where the Fuentes Bowl was found, and that they were fair-skinned. If the Inca ‘kings’ married Chachapoyas women, their offspring (future Machu Picchu Inca kings) would carry this potentially Celtic blood.

The typical Peruvian of today may appear to have darker skin, but then much of Peru is at a high altitude, which is known to have extreme sun tanning effects on fair skin. Also, there is a mix of Spanish/Moorish blood in many

Peruvians, perhaps contributing to the darkening of otherwise fair skin.

There is no definitive answer as to whether Machu Picchu or the Andean cultures had anything to do with the Celtic race, however there is a lot of evidence that this area was settled by Euro-Asian people who pre-dated Columbus perhaps by as much as a few thousand years.

It is well-accepted at this point that the Clovis culture grew in North and South America from people crossing the Bering Strait when it was ice covered, many thousands of years ago. Other evidence suggests that the Clovis people could have inherited technology from the Solutrean people who lived in southern Europe 21,000–15,000 years ago, and who created the first Stone Age artwork in present-day southern France.

The link is suggested by the similarity in technology between the projectile points of the Solutreans and those of the Clovis people. This model envisions these European people making the crossing in small watercraft via the edge of the pack ice in the North Atlantic Ocean that then extended to the Atlantic coast of France, using skills similar to those of the modern Inuit people.

It is likely that the Americas were a melting pot of many civilizations long before that expression was coined for the United States.

It is at least possible that among these early “Americans” were some people of Celtic origin, who perhaps spanned thousands of years, and many migrations, in arriving in the Western Hemisphere. These are the mysteries that keep scientists, archeologists, and people like those who read the Celtic Guide glued to the news of the next discovery, the next DNA surprise, the next uncovered ruin, the next wild theory.

We are relatively certain aliens from UFOs are not responsible for Machu Picchu. Instead, it was perhaps the culmination of many cultures and many beliefs coming together in the relatively short-lived existence of the Inca culture. Quite obviously, Machu Picchu’s mysteries will prevail as have so many from the known Celtic countries.



# On Moving Big Stones

by James McQuiston

One lesson I learned in Peru has to do with the moving of large stones. The huge stones at sites like Machu Picchu and Sacsayhuaman have baffled modern man, for decades, just as those of Stonehenge and other Celtic standing stone sites have.

It seems the stones were stacked this way for defensive purposes. It appears that adobe huts, made of clay soil, plant fibers, and animal hair, were just not a strong enough defensive wall against the terrors of the day.

Next are found ruins of stone walls made of smaller manageable-sizes. But these, too, were able to be penetrated by a determined enemy.

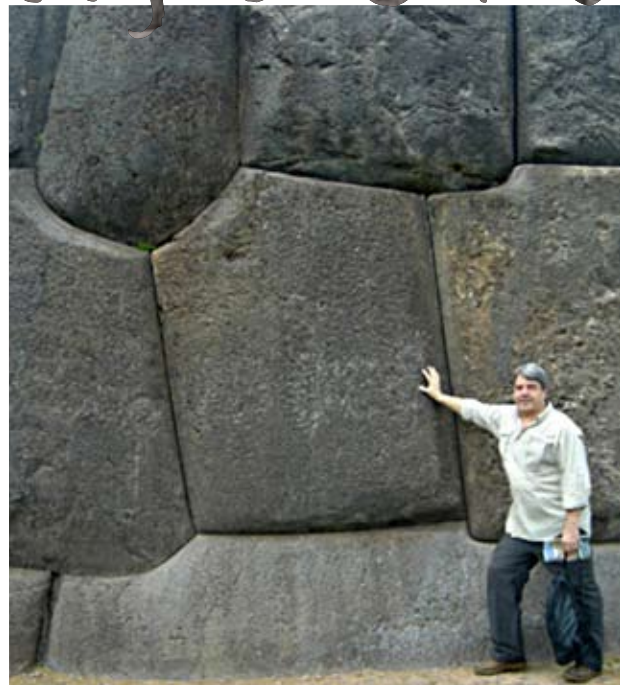
The massive stones apparent at so many South American sites seem to have been meant to create an impenetrable defense and also perhaps to impress the enemy or the public because the Inca could handle such large stones. A few sites were left unfinished and there is absolute evidence that these stones were moved by rolling them along on stone cylinders. How they were hoisted into the air, in these cases, is still a mystery, unless earthen ramps were built, and later removed, to assist in placing the higher stones.

There is an interesting posting online at:

<http://www.theforgottentechnology.com/newpage1>

In this case, a gentleman from Michigan, out of necessity, found he could move large stones by himself to an uncanny degree. Later, he used levers and smaller swivel stones, plus a fulcrum or see/saw type arrangement to raised and move incredibly large stones. His name is Wallace Wallington and he tells the Celtic Guide, "It is much easier and simpler than people think, but I did find it addicting and challenging."

His videos, on the site mentioned above, tell the story much better than I can, but suffice it to say, he purposely avoided any kind of mechanical device that would not have been



*Celtic Guide editor Jim McQuiston stands near the gigantic, mysterious stones of the Inca site of Sacsayhuaman, known jokingly as 'sexy woman' by Peruvian locals. This site was both defensive and ceremonial in nature, as so many stone sites in Celtic countries are thought to also have been.*

available to ancient Celts (or Peruvians) and was able, again single-handidly, to move amounts of over ten tons! He appeared on the History Channel and the Discovery Channel with his marvelous, re-discovered technology and he helps explain a mystery that has baffled people for a long time. He even moved an entire barn single-handidly!

I think we can all rest assured that mankind, surrounded by stones and a dwindling wood supply, due to fires, building, boats, etc., was able to master stone – to chisel it out of existing rock, to polish it with Hematite or other harder substances, move it to new locations, raise it in the air, vitrify it, and build wonderous fortifications, temples, and castles with it, all without a single extraterrestrial being involved!

# Scotland

## Need I say more?

by Victoria Roberts



photos by Cameron Morrison

Having had two writing friends just return from tearing up the Scottish countryside and having to turn another friend down who asked me to be her travel buddy this September, Scotland is definitely calling my name. But I don't think I'll be traveling on my dream vacation any time soon.

Like most folks, life's misadventures come up more often than I'd like them to. So for right now, I have to live vicariously through my friends—and the internet, and books.

I think you get the picture.

I must say though, I'm definitely holding Cameron Morrison (my favorite Scottish photographer) to his promise. When I do make it across the pond, what better way to tour the bonny sights of Scotland than by having Cam show me where he took some of those fabulous shots?

I've started to make my bucket list of places

to see in Scotland, and here are some of those phenomenal places in no particular order.

### **Kilchurn Castle**

I find that authors must experience for themselves the places they write about. We're crazy like that. Frankly, the whole experience completes our fulfillment. And what better way to satisfy my whole MacGregor-Campbell fascination than by seeing the inspiration behind where Laird Ciaran MacGregor wooed, and ultimately won, Lady Rosalia Armstrong?

Kilchurn Castle, shown in the photo above, is definitely on that must-see list.

Edinburgh Castle, Scott Monument, and Princess Street Gardens – to be honest, I'd love a scenic tour of all Edinburgh.

*I. Want. To. Explore!*

Who wouldn't love to sit in a Scottish pub and chat with the locals?





### **Princess Street Gardens**

A public park at the center of Edinburgh, Scotland, in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle.



### **Five Sisters of Kintail**

Lady Sybella MacKenzie, the heroine in my third book was from Kintail. I would love to see this sight in person. I want to stand in that spot—right there! C'mon. I know you want to join me!



### **Pentland National Park**

I have seen some amazing pictures of this place. Perhaps a nice long walk in the fall?

Scotland is definitely a Celtic adventure worth having; some say a trip of a lifetime. To be honest, I don't think I'd find the strength to come home. Who knows? Perhaps I would be home...





Premium Quality  
Art rubber stamps  
Celebrating the Celtic Nations  
Scottish Clan Badges, too

[www.triskelt.com](http://www.triskelt.com)  
[www.facebook.com/triskelt](http://www.facebook.com/triskelt)  
[www.etsy.com/triskelt](http://www.etsy.com/triskelt)

## *He was a Highland Rogue*

—wicked with a bow and  
just as wicked with the ladies...

“DEFINITELY AN  
AUTHOR WHOSE  
NEXT BOOK WILL BE  
EAGERLY AWAITED BY  
HER READERS”

—RT BOOK REVIEWS

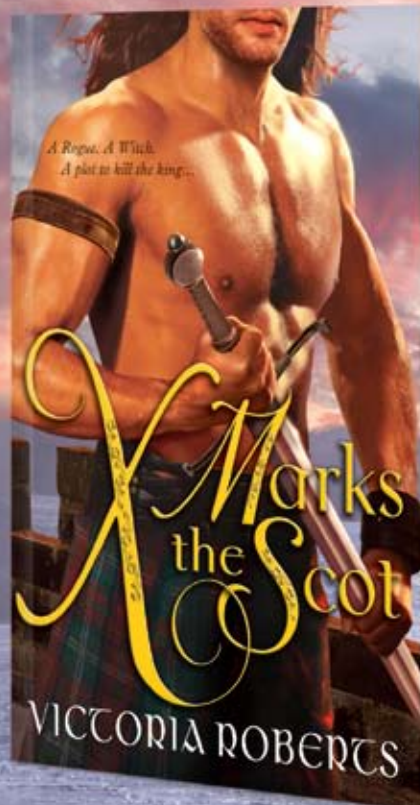
Available February 2013!

ISBN# 978-1-4022-7009-3



Nominated for a RT Reviewers Choice  
Award for First Historical Romance  
[www.victoriarobertsauthor.com](http://www.victoriarobertsauthor.com)

sourcebooks  
casablanca





# Celtic Vacations

by James McQuiston

Your Celtic Guide editor and chief has been very blessed to have taken a handful of Celtic vacations. In this article I will try to provide some valuable travel tidbits and some personal experience to help anyone who is planning to do the same, with a focus on places I have visited.

The Six Celtic Nations are traditionally the territories in Northern and Western Europe in which Celtic languages and cultural traits such as art, history, music, dance and literature have survived. The term “nation” is used in its original sense to mean a people who share a common identity and culture and are identified with a traditional territory or region. It is not used here to denote a sovereign state.

The six territories recognized as Celtic nations are Brittany, Cornwall, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Scotland, and Wales.

Each of these regions has a Celtic language that is either still spoken or was spoken in modern times. In addition, areas of Northwestern Spain and Portugal, particularly Galicia, Cantabria and Asturias, plus Minho, Douro, Tras-os-Montes (Northern Portugal) are oftentimes identified as Celtic, due to the unique culture of the region.

Before the expansions of the Roman Empire and of the Germanic tribes, a significant part of Europe was Celtic.

In other regions, people with a heritage from one of the Celtic nations also associate with the Celtic identity. In these areas Celtic traditions and languages are significant components of local culture. These include the permanent North American *Gaeltacht* in Tamworth, Ontario, Canada, which is the only Irish *Gaeltacht* outside of Ireland; the Chubut valley of Patagonia with Welsh-speaking Argentines (known as Y Wladfa); Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, with Gaelic-speaking Canadians; and southeast Newfoundland with Irish-speaking Canadians. Also, the Yukon River territory of both Canada

and the United States had a substantial influx of Scottish and Irish explorers, trappers and miners, resulting in many place-names in that area being of a Celtic nature.

The United States of America was subject to migration from Celtic peoples, or people from Celtic nations. Irish-speaking Catholics congregated particularly in the East Coast cities of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, while Scots and Ulster-Scots were particularly prominent in New England and Pennsylvania and later stretching into the Southern United States, including and especially Appalachia.

And of course England has a fair amount of Celtic background mixed in with Anglo-Saxon, Norman and other influences.

Of all of these places, I have visited Scotland, Ireland, England, Nova Scotia, the Yukon, the Celtic-founded cities of Munich and Zurich, and particularly Scottish-Irish haunts throughout the eastern United States.

I can only speak from experience and **I do not present myself here as any type of expert on travel.** However, I may be able to add some insight if you are traveling to the countries that I have also been lucky enough to visit.

My first love is no doubt Scotland. I have traversed nearly every region of this country, over three visits – minus the Aberdeen area and the Scottish islands, except for the Isle of Skye, which I have visited three times. The principal airports are Glasgow International (this airport is located just outside the smaller city of Paisley, a short distance from Glasgow), Glasgow Prestwick Airport (about 32 miles from Glasgow center), Edinburgh and Aberdeen, with several smaller airports at places like Inverness, Perth, Fife, Dundee and other smaller island airports.

Also, Manchester, England, presents an alternative airport since it is but a short drive into Scotland from there.

On my first trip to Scotland, in 1999, I flew into Manchester where I was met by my son. We drove immediately North and I kissed the ground of Scotland within minutes of passing over the border.

Manchester was nice in that we also later visited Liverpool, England, home of the Beatles, and York, which is an amazing walled town with buildings and views right out of a Hollywood movie.

My next two trips to Scotland began at the Glasgow International Airport. This airport dumps out principally into the town of Paisley, home to Paisley Abbey, one of the most significant abbeys in all of Scottish history.

Within a few turns and roundabouts you are headed North to the Highlands, to Glencoe, Loch Ness, the Isle of Skye - whatever is your destination. Heading East you would arrive at Glasgow and eventually Edinburgh. These are large cities and not to be taken lightly if you are

driving for the first time on the opposite side of the road. Heading West you would come to the coast where you'll find places like the Troon Golf Course, home of the first ever Open Golf Tournament, and home to the 'McQuiston Cup' golf trophy, plus Dundonald Castle and many other fine locations. Southeast takes you to the Stranraer Ferry, which crosses over to Belfast, Northern Ireland. Further in this direction are towns like Wigton that played integral roles in Scottish history.

On one trip we booked a driver for the first few days to take us through Glasgow and Edinburgh, then struck out on our own to points North, West, and East. I would highly recommend this plan for first time UK drivers.

North you will find Glencoe, one of the most beautiful places on earth . . . a veritable postcard spanning 360 degrees. Also, the Isle of Skye is one of the hottest destinations for many folks within and outside the UK.





Inverness has its famous castle and famous monster of Loch Ness, and further Northeast, Caithness offers some dramatic scenery of the sea and a view over to the Orkneys, plus Scotland's furthestmost point North, the village of John o'Groats.

Once out on the open highway there are very few signs to block the age-old views and only a speed camera once in awhile to keep you under control as you drive through this little bit o' Heaven.

Scotland uses the English pound for its currency and accents vary in different localities but all are enjoyable to hear and easily understandable. There are B&Bs scattered everywhere that offer a taste of old Scotland, plus a few new twists here and there. One I stayed at in Crianlarich featured a Caribbean motif since the owners had spent much time in Belize. Another I stayed at on the Isle of Skye offered an African motif as these owners had visited that country a few times. This B&B also served as the local post office and ambulance station, and had a great view of the ferry route.

You are in for a treat no matter where you stay or visit in this beautiful country.

Over in Ireland, there are several airports to choose from including Galway, Dublin, Belfast

International, Shannon, Cork and more. It depends somewhat on where you are flying in from, and where you wish to visit.

There are two Irelands of course – The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. However travel between the two is generally not a problem and the only real difference to the traveler is that of the currency, Northern Ireland using the British pound.

It is entirely possible to fly into any airport and travel around most of Ireland depending on the amount of time you have.

The North offers the rugged Antrim coast, the city of Belfast with its port (where the Titanic was built) and its university and museums, plus the Bushmill Distillery further North and many castles one of which we visited at Dunluce.

Somewhat center stage in Ireland is County Meath where the Hill of Tara is located. This is where the High Kings of Ireland once ruled from and it is said you can see bits of 16 out of the 32 counties that make up the whole of Ireland from atop its perch.

Dublin has its vibrant city life and the West has some amazing scenery. Again, it all depends on what your goal is. Accents vary somewhat from place to place adding another wonderful flavor to your travels.

## Dunluce Castle, Northern Ireland



Next we move to Nova Scotia, home to the oldest Highland Games outside of Scotland and to the wonderful, musical, magical Cape Breton. The town of Antigonish is where the Games are held each year. This year they will be celebrating 150 years since the Games first began. This will take place July 7-14, 2013, so mark your calendar if heading to Nova Scotia.

Across a causeway from the main part of Nova Scotia lies the island of Cape Breton. It is here where Celtic music has reached a new level of sophistication and performance by the likes of Natalie MacMaster and others. It is said that these folks only work a day job to enable them to play music. They are GOOD!

We visited the Celtic Music Interpretive Center and the Gaelic College on Cape Breton, and drove the Ceilidh Trail where we heard music sessions, and individual performers every day of our visit, usually at more than one location. In addition to the Antigonish Games, another great reason to visit Nova Scotia is the Celtic Colours International Festival held each October and featuring music, music, music!

Flights land at Halifax and a nice system of highways take you past many quaint and enjoyable villages. The last I knew the ferry service from Maine has been discontinued but it is possible to drive to Nova Scotia from Maine by passing through New Brunswick.

It is said that Nova Scotia is more Scottish than Scotland. That might be a stretch but the Gaelic language is strong, the music is sweet and the scenery is amazing.

On the other side of Canada lies the Yukon River, a challenging region especially if one wishes to travel to Dawson City and the Klondike River area, where so much history took place. While you won't see anything that stands out as particularly Celtic here, many places and many of the earliest explorers had Celtic names. This is because the Hudsons Bay Company purposely hired many Scots and Irish who were used to working and traveling in rugged territory.

To get to Dawson you have two choices after a long flight over barren territory to Whitehorse.

One choice is to drive about seven hours through some of the most wild wilderness still known to man. The other is to fly in on a small plane to a small airport.

Once there, you can visit much of old Dawson still standing, including saloons and dance halls. The Dome is a spot just outside of Dawson where the Yukon River is visible for a long distance in either direction. And for extra fun you can drive across the most Northerly border crossing between Canada and the U.S. to visit Eagle, Alaska, and other remote spots. It is a long, long drive filled with sites of valleys and caribou and roaring rivers.

I have yet to visit the Galicia region of Spain and Portugal but did make a stop at two cities founded by the Celts. One was Munich, Germany, which we happened to catch on the last day of Oktoberfest. Whew! 'Nuff said.

The other city we visited was Zurich, Switzerland. It was near here that one of the largest caches of Alpine Celtic artifacts were found. They make up the first several displays of the Swiss National Museum, and show just how brilliant the Celts were. There are examples of art and weaponry but also of everyday articles like clothespins and shut off valves for water supplies, all thousands of years old.

There is perhaps no better place in the world to view artifacts of the earliest years of the Celtic race than this museum.

In the United States there are great Irish pubs and parades in the Northeast cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and even Washington, DC. For a more Scottish-Irish view of the world, there is an abundance of evidence in New England, in places like Litchfield and Londonderry, NH, in Pennsylvania especially around Philadelphia (home to the Scotch-Irish Society), and throughout the South.

There are oodles of Highland Games and Celtic Festivals all over the U.S. and there are museums that lean towards Scottish-Irish folklore, which can be found easily online.

I think the world has enough Celtic Vacations to suit just about any taste. So many more to go!



# Exploring Munster

by Pollyanna Jones **Jewel of the Emerald Isle**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Pollyanna Jones comes to us from England, with stories here of Ireland. She has written quite extensively and has a Facebook site at –

<http://www.facebook.com/SeidkonasHearth?ref=hl>

Ireland has always been a land steeped in myth and legend, romanticised by tales of gods and heroes and the magical beings that dwell deep within mountains or magical realms that only a chosen few ever encounter. The country itself is split into two; Northern Ireland, which is ruled over by Britain, and the Republic of Ireland, known in Gaelic as *Eire*.

The ancient capital of this land was Tara, where the High King of Ireland dwelt. In these times, the land was split into four great kingdoms; Ulster, Leinster, Munster, and Connacht. Each of these kingdoms has its own trove of amazing legends, such as Cú Chulainn of Ulster, son of the god Lugh, and the wise Druids of Connacht, seat of learning of all Eire.

In this article I shall be looking at the kingdom of Munster, stronghold of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Munster is named after Muman, a Gaelic deity.

According to legend, the Tuatha Dé Danann were the people of the goddess Danu, who is believed to have been a mother goddess associated with land and primordial water. It is thought that these people came from the region around the Danube in modern-day Germany.

One story tells of how the Tuatha Dé Danann followed the star Aldabaran to the west and arrived in Eriu (the old name for Eire). At the time of their arrival, the land was ruled by a tribe known as the Fir Bolg. The king of the Tuatha, named Nuada met with the king of the Fir Bolg and petitioned for half ownership of the land. King Eochaidh of the Fir Bolg refused, and so

the two races met at the Pass of Balgatan and did battle. Known as the Battle of Mag Tuired, they fought for four days, during which a champion of the Fir Bolg known as Sreng, challenged Nuada in combat. With one swipe of his sword, he cut off Nuada's right hand. Despite this, the Tuatha Dé Danann defeated the Fir Bolg, when the goddess Morrígan in her war aspect, killed Eochaidh. However, the Tuatha were a noble bunch, and as a token of goodwill to respect the nobility and spirit of the Fir Bolg, they granted them a quarter of Eriu as their own to dwell in peace.

The Fir Bolg chose Connacht, in the north-west quarter of Ireland and lived there thereafter. After Nuada was wounded, he was not considered whole and despite being made a silver hand, rulership went to Dagda, son of Danu.

One of Dagda's names, Eochaidh Ollathair, means All-Father, and he was considered the divine father of the Tuatha Dé Danann.

In later legend, the Tuatha Dé Danann are believed to have become the Aes Sídh, which literally means "people of the mounds". It is said that they were driven underground by the Milesians, a Celtic tribe from Iberia. The Sídh was now seen as magical beings, elves, land spirits, and fair folk. When wandering Munster it is not difficult to feel their presence.

In modern times, Munster is comprised of the counties Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, and Waterford. It is a land of majestic mountains, rugged coastlines, and history. As a result, this part of Ireland is a popular tourist destination, many heading to Killarney and its lakes. Unfortunately as a result, this once charming town has now exploded with large hotels and golf courses to cater for the demands of the tourists.

Although good for the economy, the ambience of the town has suffered a little for it. However, it is an excellent base to begin a tour of the region, and without having to travel too far, peaceful and atmospheric scenery can be found. Killarney in County Kerry, sits on the meeting point of three lakes, tucked in a valley overlooked by a mountain range named the Macgillicuddy's Reeks. Meaning "the black stacks", these mountains are home to Ireland's highest peak, Carrauntoohil. Many passes traverse the mountains, including the breathtaking Gap of Dunloe. Ireland was covered in ice until the retreating of the ice sheets 9,000 years ago, and this is the reason that you will find no snakes there... they never made it across as it was not suitable habitat! Never mind the legend of St. Patrick! As a result of the ice age, the scenery of this area is filled with rugged peaks and sweeping valleys, peat bogs, and lakes, typical of a once glaciated landscape.



*View overlooking Macgillicuddy's Reeks and Killarney Lakes.*

There is plenty to see in Munster for the visitor who is interested in Celtic culture and history. From Neolithic standing stones and burial mounds to later Christian Celtic art, it seems that every town and village has its own treasure for you to discover. The Ring of Kerry is well signposted from Killarney and is a scenic drive that takes you through many historic and scenic parts of the region. Travelling north-west from this route, you will come across

Inch Strand, a long sand bar jutting out into the Atlantic. In the sand dunes lie the remains of Iron Age settlements, stacks of sea shells discarded by these people uncovered at times by the wind. It is said that it was here at Inch that Neimh Cinn Óir rode from Tír Na nÓg into the land of mortals and fell in love with Oisín.

Continuing west from Inch, you find yourself on the Dingle Peninsula. In the mountains to the north runs the Connor Pass that is a shortcut to the town of Tralee, famous for its annual Rose of Tralee beauty contest. As you traverse the mountain pass you will see standing stones, and a ruin, barely more than a pile of weathered stones, which was home to "The Red Hand", a powerful sorcerer of the Tuatha Dé Danann.

The Dingle Peninsula is very beautiful. To the left, the Atlantic crashes into cliff sides or golden beaches. Along the route are found the marks of the people that dwelt here long ago, amidst the grottoes of the modern Catholic faith. Beehive huts, drystone structures built by early Christian monks have survived for a thousand years, whilst the mounds and stone circles of older cultures have watched the passing of history with older eyes.



*Coastal road, Dingle Peninsula.*

On the northern part of the Peninsula can be found Kilmalkedar church. It is a site that displays an extraordinary amount of history. Among the ruins of the early Christian chapel can be found an early sundial, an "alphabet stone", and an Ogham stone.





*Kilnalkedar church, with Ogham Stone on the left, and early cross on the right.*

*Close up of the Ogham Stone*

Ogham is an old and mysterious language, sometimes known as the “tree alphabet”, as each letter is named after a tree or plant. It is thought to have been produced in the 1st century AD, although most of the surviving Ogham Stones are from the 4th and 5th Centuries. The west coast of Ireland is a splendid place to locate a number of these, and beside the one at Kilnalkedar, others can be found at Derrynane Beg, Dunloe Lower, Lugnagappul, and Colaiste Ide.

The “alphabet stone” at Kilnalkedar is carved with the Latin alphabet, along with some beautiful decoration. The top of the stone has been broken off, but it seems to have served the purpose of teaching the locals a new language when it was first erected in the 6th Century.



*The Alphabet Stone at Kilnalkedar.*

Continuing north and across the River Shannon by ferry, one reaches County Clare. The landscape here changes from rugged mountains to a vast limestone plateau, known as The Burren.

This is a site of huge importance both historically and for its wildlife. Beneath the Burren is a network of caves where the water has become acidic from the limestone and has eaten away through the deep earth.

Ailwee Caves are an excellent place to visit to see a fine example of the artwork of mother nature. The Burren rises up from the sea like a great rock, and it is from this that it is given its name; Boireann meaning “great rock”. It seems at first glance to be a hostile landscape, but if you look closer, it is a unique habitat for rare species in the clints and grykes of the limestone pavement.





*The Burren from the sea.*

In the limestone paving can be found an assortment of plants that are more usually found in the Mediterranean, Arctic, or Alpine regions. Many have grown here since the Ice Age and are found nowhere else in the British Isles or Ireland. As a result, it is a haven for botanists, with people travelling from all over the world to visit this unique and protected habitat.



*Some of the flora found at The Burren.*

The Burren is also home to over 90 Neolithic tombs, many dolmens, and hill forts. Due to its nature, it was unsuitable for agriculture. Besides being impossible to grow a crop on this sort of terrain, it was dangerous for livestock as animals could become trapped between the craggy stone paving, or break their legs. Due to this, the landscape has been mostly undisturbed.



*Poul nabrone Dolmen, The Burren*



*Megalithic Tomb, The Burren*

It is thought that these burial sites were originally covered over with soil. Yet unlike the burial mounds in Kerry, the harsh landscape has resulted in these being partially or fully uncovered. This has allowed archaeologists to study the sites in more depth and gain a better understanding of the burial rituals of these ancient people.

There are many remains of ancient settlements in The Burren, including one of the best preserved Celtic ringforts in the world; Caherconnell Stone Fort. Built in the 5th Century and inhabited until the 15th Century, the fort uses an inland cliff to fortify it from unwanted



visitors. Access is through a narrow gorge, and travelling to the fort it would be easy to see how an invading tribe would have suffered from the spears of the defenders if they tried to make the journey. You can practically feel the spirits of those that dwelt here watching you as you ascend the valley to their stronghold, and I half expected to be challenged when I reached the top.

Strangely enough, we were followed by a grey hound all around the fort, even though nobody else was there. I like to think that he was a warden.



*The gorge at Caherconnell, with the wall of the fort on the right of the photograph.*

Described by some as the Machu Picchu of Ireland, it is certainly worth a visit. It is quite a climb to the fort though, so allow yourself at least three hours if you wish to explore the site. Along the gorge grow wild strawberries, which were a welcome snack along the journey!

Back down to civilisation, to the south of The Burren, one can find the village of Kilfenora. In more recent times it was used as a location for many episodes of the comedy, Father Ted. It is also home to one of Ireland's famous High Crosses. Erected in the 12th Century, it stands at the site of a now partially ruined cathedral.

The stonework on the cross is exquisite, and is a fine example of Celtic artwork, famously found in the Book of Kells, which is housed in Trinity College, Dublin.

Munster is still as magical a kingdom as it was in the time of the Tuatha Dé Danann. It makes for an excellent holiday location and has much to offer, whether you are interested in sports, history, nature, or mythology.



*Kilfenora High Cross*

You can fly directly to Cork Airport from much of the UK, but if travelling from farther afield, it is roughly a four hour drive from Dublin. Gaelic is still spoken in many parts of the region, and with a sleepy and traditional nature, the people are friendly and welcoming, eager to share tales of their beloved lands with those visiting them. There are many, many, more wonderful places to visit in this region, although I think I will need another “field trip” to get some more photographs!

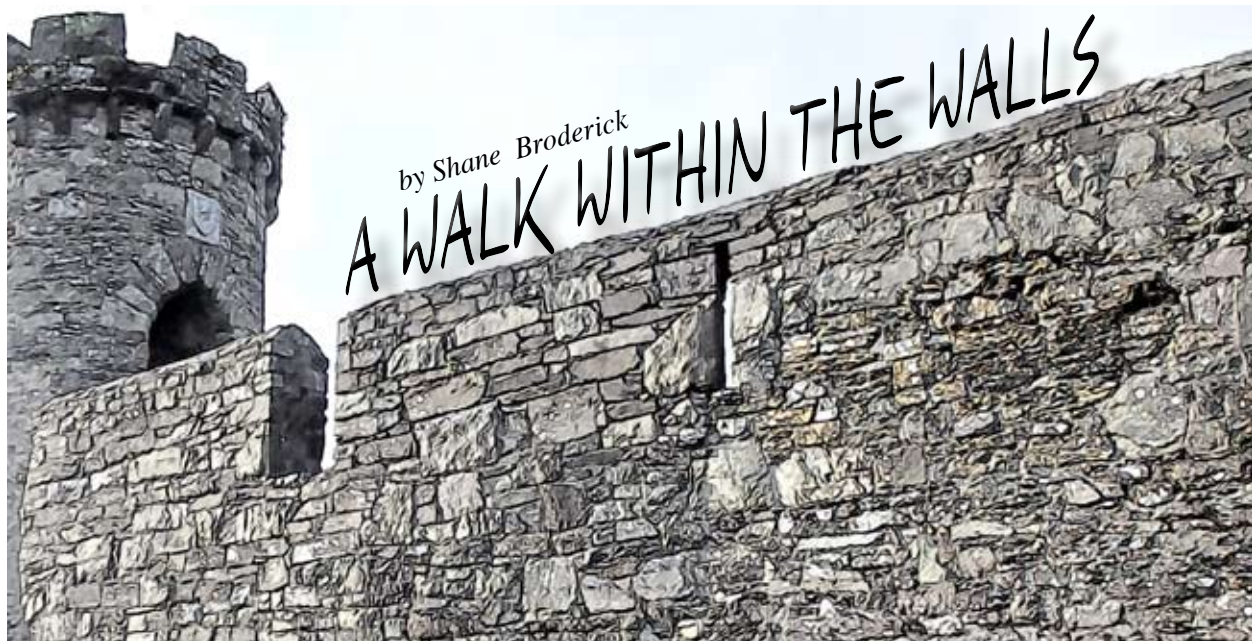


Map of locations in this article:

1. Killarney, Co. Kerry
2. Inch Strand, Co. Kerry
3. Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry
4. Kilmalkedar church, Co. Kerry
5. The Burren National Park, Co. Clare
6. Caherconell Fort, Co. Clare
7. Kilfenora, Co. Clare

Map image from Google Maps

Photographs by Linda Robbins, used with permission



Ever since I was first invited to write for the Celtic Guide I've been looking for an opportunity to share the sights and history of my home town. This month's theme of Celtic Vacations has given me just that opportunity.

I live in a small town in the southeast of Ireland, in County Cork. That town is called Youghal, or *Eochaill* in the old Irish tongue, which means 'yew forest' (so called for the yew trees that used to surround the town).

It was once one of the busiest ports in Ireland and England, second only to Bristol, and it was completely surrounded by fortified town walls and its battlements. There is a large section of these walls still standing.

This town has been witness to some interesting (and bloody) events and to some famous (or infamous, as the case may be) characters. If the stones could talk they would have many a tale to tell.



It has miles of blue flag beaches (if the Irish weather provides some sunshine) and beautiful vistas that provide a lovely town to relax in.

And, it is close to the cities of Cork and Waterford if you're in the mood for a shopping trip.

I'm going to share some of these places and people with you plus a short tale of the most interesting points in the town's history





The earliest evidence of settlement in Youghal is from Mesolithic times, some 8,000 years ago. Artifacts that have been found include a stone backed blade and a mudstone axe. Some arrowheads were also found in what is now the outskirts of the town.

The Celtic culture arrived around 2,500 years ago and many fine fortified enclosures, called *raths*, survive in the countryside surrounding Youghal. One of the earliest settlements would most likely have been a *rath* and this is remembered in the name of a very old road on the outskirts of the town walls called Raheen Road.

The earliest sign of Christianity in Youghal is from the 5th century and was the site of the church of Coran. The holy well of St. Coran is still on the site.

In the 9th century the town played host to the Vikings. They established a settlement here and used the town to invade the wealthy monasteries including nearby Dungarvan and Malona Abbey. It is recorded that, in 864, a battle ensued between the neighbouring Deise clan and the Deise destroyed the Norse fort. No evidence has been found to tell the location of the fort, but a stone in the transept of St. Mary's Church still bears the faint carving of a Viking longship. Youghal received its first charter from King John in the 13th century and gained great

power and influence in Europe as an important port. It suffered greatly during the plague and is thought to have lost half its population.

During the Desmond Rebellion the town was sacked and the garrison was burned. Due to poor maintenance, the town soon fell to the rebels and the fortifications were broken. A few weeks later the English retook the town led by the Earl of Ormond, and they reoccupied the town. The lord mayor was then hanged from the door of his residence as punishment for failing to maintain the town's defences.

One of the famous characters (and the namesake of a hotel) was Sir Walter Raleigh. He came to Ireland as part of an army sent here to put down the Desmond Rebellion. He was given 42,000 acres of land in Munster and his house, Myrtle Grove, was built in the 16th century. It was originally the residence of the college warden. Its exterior was altered in the 16th, 18th and 19th century's but still keeps some of its original character. Some internal features possibly date back to the 1580's.

In 1585, Raleigh planted what are thought to be the first potatoes in Ireland and also the first tobacco. There's a funny story regarding the tobacco. Sir Walter lit up his pipe, much to the horror of one of his servants who, for the first time seeing someone smoking, thought his master was on fire and proceeded to throw a bucket of water over Raleigh. He was the mayor of Youghal from 1588 to 1589 (which was probably for the best, seeing how precarious the job title seems to have been to some). He sold all his possessions and land to Richard Boyle in 1602, which brings us to our next person of interest.

Richard Boyle arrived in Ireland in 1588 almost penniless and with a stroke of luck married a wealthy heiress in 1595. The yew trees of Youghal were used to feed his ironworks and he also exported them abroad.

A cannon that is thought to have been made by Boyle's ironworks is still in the gardens of the college that was later established from his residence.



There are still some remnants of his influence in town including his Alms houses and his monument in St. Mary's Church. The Alms houses he built were for six retired soldiers and they were given the princely sum of £5 per annum. This was later extended to widows. They provide a similar service today and are still relatively original. He also renovated the south transept of St Mary's Church (later called Boyles Chapel) after it had been damaged during the Desmond Rebellion.



Boyle built a magnificent memorial to himself depicting him, his two wives and some of his 15 children. Some of these are depicted lying down holding skulls (denoting that they died in infancy). One of his children was later known for Boyle's Law in chemistry.

This beautiful monument is made from seven different types of marble and still retains a lot of its original paintwork. I've spent hours gazing at it picking out all the little details.



Boyle died in 1643 and was buried in the church.

I will now give you some of the history of some of the buildings from the other photos:



### ST. MARY'S COLLEGIATE CHURCH

The church is thought to have been a monastic settlement of St. Declan of Ardmore (circa 450).

It was rebuilt in the Irish Romanesque style around the year 750 and the great nave was erected in 1220. The roof timbers have been carbon dated to around 1170. In the early 13th century there was a rebuilding under the master masons of 4 local guilds. Their marks can be seen on the gothic arches. It was on the 27th December when it was made into a collegiate church with the foundation of Our Lady's



College of Youghal, by the Earl of Desmond, Thomas Fitzgerald. It is a building of great historical importance for Ireland and is a national monument. The stained glass windows in the photo show the coat of arms of important families in the town at the time



### CLOCK GATE

As I mentioned Youghal was one of the most significant maritime centres of medieval Ireland, commanding important trading routes to northern and western Europe. Built into the town walls were heavily guarded gates. When the town expanded south, a new 'base' or outer town (for the lower classes), also walled, was built alongside the inner town. A massive battlemented south gate was built (depicted in the *Pacata Hibernian* in 1633). It was comprised of a pair of circular towers connected by a portcullis and provided access between both districts and also doubled as a prison. It was renamed Trinity Gate.

The gate was originally equipped with a sundial, but on the 28th April 1620 the corporation ordered that a clock be placed there. In 1622 Balthazar Portingale was appointed as clock

keeper and given free lodgings in exchange for ringing the bell. In spite of repairs it began to deteriorate and on the 20th October 1776 it was decided to demolish and replace it with a gaol and gaoler's house with a proper building. The current building you see now was built in 1777 and it was enlarged some years later because of the amount of people arrested as rebels. It was also used as a public gallows and many people were hanged from the windows including some members of the united Irishmen. The building became a symbol of terror and tyranny, a reputation it kept until 1837. It has not been in public use since the 1970's when it was a museum. It is currently under renovation to be opened once again to the public.

### WATER GATE

This used to be the only access from the quay and was one of the busiest places in town. It is known locally as Cromwells Arch as it was from here that he left Ireland in 1650s after he had overwintered in the town. This was after his campaign (or more accurately slaughter) in Ireland. It was originally built in the 13th century and was restored in the 18th century, and lies adjacent to the site of the exchange and a stonethrow away from the clock gate.





### THE EXCHANGE

The first was built in 1672 and was situated just outside the town walls fronting onto the medieval quay. It was once a theatre where groups from all over would come to perform here. The immediate area including the dock was used

for the filming of the movie Moby Dick. The pub that was used as the filmmaker's HQ was renamed Moby Dick's. The exchange building was also used as a courthouse.

### THE LIGHTHOUSE

The picturesque (as I'm sure you will agree) lighthouse is situated at the entrance to the harbour. The Geraldine owners of the town originally built a tower on the site and generously funded the nuns of the Chapel of St. Anne under the condition that they maintain the light in the tower. It was demolished in 1840 to make way for the current lighthouse to be built, due to the large number of vessels using the harbour, which was over 500 circa 1850. Construction began in 1852 and it was made from granite.





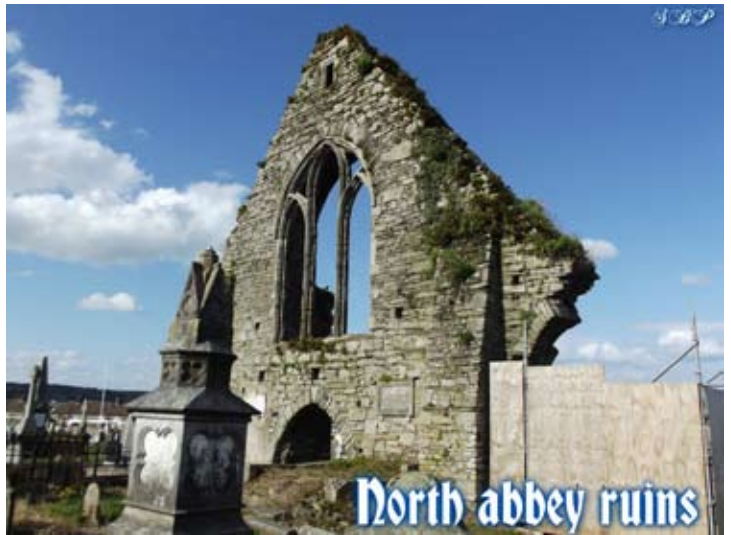
## THE RED HOUSE

Built in 18th century for the Uniacke family, it is thought to be the only example of the Dutch or Queen Anne style town house in use as a private house in Ireland.

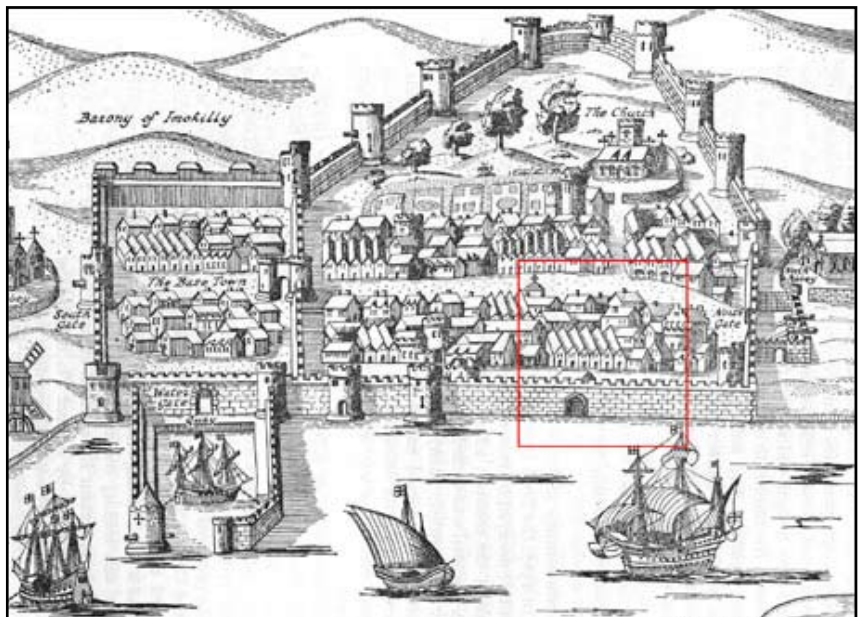
## NORTH ABBEY RUINS

The Dominican Priory was founded in 1268 by Thomas Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, whose grandfather had founded the abbey in South Abbey. It was initially dedicated to the Holy Cross but was changed to Our Lady of Graces.

This was brought about by the rediscovery of a small ivory statue of the madonna and child. This made the priory the centre of Marian worship for several centuries till it was dissolved in the 16th century. That statue can now be found in Cork City and is said to have caused some miraculous healing. If I remember correctly it was originally washed up in the centre of a solid oak log, which was very easy to lift and was said to have given a blind man his sight back. Some ruins of the abbey still remain and it is situated in the main cemetery of the town.



As you can see it is a town steeped in history and I hope you have enjoyed the trip through time and the history of my town. I love walking past these places everyday and I always try to imagine the things that have happened there. I also loved getting the opportunity to share my photos with everyone. I have also included an old map of the town so you can see the set up of the town walls way back when.



# So, what's next?

Now there's a well packed free e-magazine on choices to be made for your next Celtic Vacation! Thanks to all who participated. Next month we are featuring Celtic Chronicles as our theme. The basic idea is to provide details on ancient books and records that were used to determine Celtic history, and also to accent modern books, records and websites that can help the reader better understand Celtic history or perhaps their own family history. Though we're not sure which month this will happen, we are also considering Celtic Villains as a theme. Maybe we'll go there for July. Of course one man's villain is another man's freedom fighter and so, once again, we won't be taking sides, just allowing our wonderful authors to tell their tales. That is what the Celtic Guide is all about - telling tales, and if there is one thing this race has, it's a lot of tales to tell. This holds true for the associated race of the Viking.

As mentioned in one of our stories, this month, some graves on Greenland were found to contain more Celtic-like DNA than Norse or Viking DNA. And yet, many Highland clans, who one would first think to be Celtic, have been found to have a more Viking-like DNA. Considering the origin myths of these two people, their existence in remote and often cold places, their war-like and independent natures, it is not hard to toss them into the same basket. Many an Irish town was named by the Viking, including Dublin. The famous Highland clan, the MacLeods, were named for a Viking named Leod. There are many examples in each direction showing that these two races, from the 9th century onward, were mingled quite dramatically and that they were a far-reaching group . . . as far as North (and perhaps South) America, as evidence seems to indicate.

And so we will continue to include both Celtic and Viking and other related races in our Celtic Guide stories, so many of which harken back to a romantic and rich past.



Premium Quality  
Art rubber stamps  
Celebrating the Celtic Nations  
Scottish Clan Badges, too

[www.triskelt.com](http://www.triskelt.com)  
[www.facebook.com/triskelt](http://www.facebook.com/triskelt)  
[www.etsy.com/triskelt](http://www.etsy.com/triskelt)

The advertisement features a green background with various Celtic-themed illustrations. On the left, there is a large, ornate Celtic knot design. In the center, there are two yellow flowers and a purple thistle. On the right, there is a large, ornate Celtic knot design. At the bottom, there are two small Celtic knot designs. The text is centered and reads: "Premium Quality Art rubber stamps Celebrating the Celtic Nations Scottish Clan Badges, too". Below the text are three website URLs: "www.triskelt.com", "www.facebook.com/triskelt", and "www.etsy.com/triskelt".