

The Virginia Highlander

Newsletter of the Saint Andrew's Society

Williamsburg, Virginia

FALL 1976

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GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN HIGHLAND GAMES DRAW HUGH CROWDS

The sights and sounds of Scotland were everywhere on MacRae Meadows, Linville, N.C., as Scots gathered for America's largest gathering of the clans.... the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. The 1976 Games drew more than 70,000 Scots, Scottish-Americans and "Sassenachs" from throughout the nation and beyond the seas.

As in the past, there were athletic contests of a Scottish nature as well as track and field events sanctioned by the AAU. To be sure, the sounds of the pipes could be heard....constantly....blending beautifully with the flashing color of tartan skirts and plaids on the dancers. Williamsburger's made their presence known....as usual. Present were Howard Topp, Jack Thompson, J.T. Baxter, Tommy Richardson, Jim McKenzie, Jerry Russell, Harold Teer, Mark Ferguson, Guy Nelson, Ken Armstrong with their wives, bairns, and assorted hangers-on.

Special Note: For those who are concerned about accomodations at the 1977 GFMG's, Howard Topp has reserved five double rooms at the Ramada Inn-Boone, N.C. in the name of the Society. These will be parcelled out on a first-come-first-served basis, so if you are anxious to attend, contact Howard to get your name on the list.

Grandfather Mountain is always an exciting, "mind-boggling" experience. I'm sure the denizens of the Williamsburg tent would most highly urge your attendance. Imagine....70,000 half-crazed....and fully crazed Scotsmen together at one time....WOW!

1976 FALL CEILIDH

On the brisk evening of the 23rd of October, the Society gathered at the Yorktown Naval Weapons Station Officers Club for our Fall Ceilidh. More than ninety lads and lassies packed the hall, enjoying the activities and fellowship.

As usual, President Paul Ritchie functioned as a gregarious host, welcoming the arrivals in his familiar polished manner. The evening was opened by the posting of the colors and the entry of the pipes and drums, appearing for the first time under their new name.

After the social hour and sumptuous feast.....and a break from tradition---no chicken or shrimp....Paul presented Past Board Member Tom Magruder with a plaque symbolizing his "life membership" award. The handsome plaque brought the "oohs and ahs" from the appreciative members. The Strath James Pipes and Drums...nee' St. Andrew's Pipes and Drums, provided an outstanding performance. Members were heard to say that the performance was the best in years. As in the past credit can be given to stage manager Sandy Yoder, Drum Major Mark Ferguson, and Pipe Major Bill Pittman. The evening ended with a "Scottish Sing-A-Long" led by Jim Anthony. Jim was aided by guitarist Howard Topp and super assistance by ladies from the audience.

It was indeed a "fun" activity. Credit must be passed on to John and Mark Ferguson for their organizational effort.

GATHERING OF THE CLANS...1977

Those of you inspired by Paul's article later in this issue, rejoice! The International Gathering of the Clans will be held in Scotland in May of 1977. Extensive plans have been prepared by just about every Scot's Clan in preparation. The most intriguing plan???? Why the Clan MacDonald. The MacDonalds are planning to charter a ship with accommodations for 1200 clansmen! The vessel will anchor off Edinburgh during the first week of the festival and then set sail for the Hebrides and all the islands connected with the Clan Donald. Those MacDonalds sure do go "first class"!

Not to be outdone, the Gordons, Gunns, Campbells, Rosses, Fergusons, etc., etc., etc., have planned tours of special significance to clan members in conjunction with the festival.

Although the Virginia Highlander doesn't endorse any specific charter tours, two of the better known organizations are listed below:

THE HIGHLANDER MAGAZINE
P. O. Box 397
Barrington, Ill. 60010

GREAT BRITAIN CHARTERS
1440 Broadway
N.Y.C., N.Y. 10018

Both organizations offer charter flights at extremely reasonable rates and special "ground packages" available as well. WOW! It sounds like quite an active couple of weeks.

A BONNIE WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

William A. MacIntosh

George P. Phillips

Donald McCammond

Leland B. Ticknor

STONE MOUNTAIN HIGHLAND

FESTIVAL GROWS IN POPULARITY



Once again the beauty of fall graced the Georgia countryside as Scots enjoyed the fellowship of the Stone Mountain Scottish Festival. With the massive hulk of Stone Mountain overseeing the activities, the sounds of the athletes, dancers, and pipers rang through the wooded area.

The honored guest for this year's festival was Commander Ian Gunn, Chief of Clan Gunn. Commander Gunn and his lovely wife were well received....and in the case of the Clan Gunn members..... loudly received.

This year's festival was the second sponsored by the Williamsburg Saint Andrew's Society. As was to be expected, the local society was well represented. Past President Topp was the official Society representative and was joined by members Haviland, Osborne, McPherson, Teer and their assorted spouses, children and kin. To be sure, the Williamsburg tent was always thronged with happy people.

The Stone Mountain Festival was described by just about everyone present as the premier Scottish activity in the country. It presents a unique blending of Scots' traditions with the warmth of Georgia hospitality. It is without reservation that all those present recommend the Stone Mountain Scottish Festival to the rest of the membership. We hope to see more of you there next October!

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Ever since the word came from St. Andrew's University that there would be a very special celebration of "The American Bicentennial in Scotland", interest in the local Society's participation has been at a high level. Many members have contacted me and asked if there would be a special report on the visit of our members to Scotland in the Fall edition of The Virginia Highlander. Seeking out President Paul, I prevailed upon our leader to give us a sketch of the three weeks of the Scottish celebration of our Bicentennial and the participation of Williamsburgers. The article which follows will give you a feeling for what transpired during three weeks in August.

SCOTLAND CELEBRATES THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL

by Paul J. Ritchie

Our tireless editor informed me that the recent visit to Scotland is readable news and having confidence in his judgement as well as being conceited enough to think that someone will devote enough time to read of my impressions of the most wonderful trip I have ever taken---I will do my best to comply with his request.

To give the reader a general concept of the marvelous hosts and hostesses we had and the area covered, I will report in some detail our first days and then chronologically outline very briefly the main events and the area involved. Should you take time to trace our journey across the map of Scotland, you will see we crossed from west to east; from north to south; from south to north; and from east to west.

Our first indication of the trip was a 1975 letter from Mr. J. Steven Watson, vice chancellor of the University of Saint Andrew's and chairman of the Celebration of the American Bicentennial in Scotland. Of particular note is the chair he held as this is the key to the entire caper and is an indication that that was Scotland's gesture to our own anniversary. True, we celebrate on the 4th of July but it took over six weeks for the 1776 sailing ships to reach Edinburgh to spread the good news. So mid-August was chosen to initiate our visit.

Invited to represent our society were Henry and Georgianna Wann; Alan and Anne Morledge and their son Clark; my daughter Ann Hartwick. We were joined by Jesse and Mary Virginia Simonson, a wonderful couple from Newport News.

More than 150 Americans on their way to Scotland departed from Kennedy Airport on the 1730 British Calodonian Flight which was airborne at 2000 hours. Arriving at Prestwick about 7:00 AM we were flattered to have Lord and Lady Ballantrae greet us and be our hosts for breakfast. Naturally, one is impressed by being greeted by a lord and lady at that time of the morning, but one is flabbergasted to learn that the lord and his lady crossed Scotland to do it. Also greeting us was Colonel John Smith, the two-year planner for this visit and now the person to execute the plan. After breakfast, we met the seven students of the University who were to be our guides, advisors and close friends for the next three weeks. Then we climbed aboard our tour buses, all new with 360 degree observation and (thank you, St. Andrew) very comfortable seats.

The weather was perfect that morning and continued to be the same for the next twenty-one days proving St. Andrew has an excellent rapport with the weather maker and he saw to it that our raincoats were excess baggage except on cold nights.

We then set off across the middle section of Scotland from the Atlantic to the North Sea. We enjoyed the beautiful countryside, dotted with quaint farms and towns; the first impression many of us had of the architecture was that the Scots built to last many generations, every building was of stone, roofs of slate or thatch and solid doors. Farms were in excellent condition considering the draught, and numerous sheep and cattle covered the lush glens

and hillsides. Sheep dogs were herding the flocks to new feeding areas and the control the shepherd had over these dogs was a sight to behold.

Just prior to noon we left the rolling highland countryside and the tall spires of Saint Andrew's heralded our arrival at that picturesque old town on the rocky shore of the North Sea. Of course, the initial point of interest was the University of St. Andrew, founded in February 1412, heralding the beginning of a three-week journey of enjoyment and adventure that was ours for the asking.

Rooms were assigned, mine was in the new Donaldson Hall, each room was a complete unit with adjoining bath, my room had a picture window facing the famous Saint Andrew's golf course where so many of us were to have the pleasure of playing. However, my initial pleasure was the first of other such Scottish gifts: There, reigning in a most kingly fashion, was my first very own bottle of Scotch---it was a bottle of _____. Sorry, I must not divulge the brand as we received other bottles and as I may not mention them all, this first bottle must be unnamed. It really does not make a real difference as this one died ere the week was past.

After lunch we were informed by our guides that the evening performance was to be out of doors and we should dress very warmly. To reconstruct this performance please permit me to quote from my notes written the following morning:



From left to right: Mary Simonson, Ann Hartwick, Henry Wann, Georgianna Wann, Anne Morledge, Paul Ritchie, Alan Morledge.

Promptly at 1845 hours we were aboard our respective bus to leave for St. Andrew's Castle, destroyed by seige in 1546. Here amid the ruins of this once great castle we were to be entertained by the Dundonald Pipe Band and the Royal Scottish Dancers. The setting was like a page torn from Robbie Burns; we were seated along the remaining north wall of the courtyard, to our immediate left was the open North Sea, waves were high and the spray often covered the retaining wall. The ruins, with their ghostly outline, rose around us, each break outlined by the sky and moon. The evening mist or "haar" from the North Sea was softly rolling in--we were in a perfect but eerie setting. Then from the distance came the inspiring skirling of the pipes, the band shrouded by the "haar" was first visible by outline until they emerged to our immediate front. The thirty-two bandsmen, resplendent in the MacDonald tartan, gave an outstanding performance of piping, drumming, and counter-marching.

Then came the Royal Scottish Country Dancers, the men wore the evening kilt of MacDonald tartan, the ladies in long white gowns and tartan sashes. We all hoped the ladies were wearing "longies" because the wind from the sea was more than drafty. Incidentally, those of our group wearing kilts were in sympathy with the male dancers. Their presentation of ancient and modern country dancing was outstanding, the castle wall background and the light "haar" all contributed to the enhancement of the performance. The dance announcer was a typical Harry Lauder and a comedian par excellence.

It was an evening I shall never forget and a perfect introduction to Scotland.

The next morning (17 August) Ann and I skipped the lecture "James Wilson, Signer of the Declaration of Independence." It seems Mr. Wilson is an alumnus of the University of St. Andrew's. In place of the lecture we went shopping for cashmeres at the local mill until 1015 when we were to have coffee at the College Hall prior to departing for the Dalgairn House.

Mr. Roger Banks, the "laird" of Dalgairn House is one of the most interesting men I have ever met....he is an internationally famous artist, a recognized naturalist, a gardening authority and at the present time is compiling a series of paintings of the natural plants and insects of Scotland for the Royal Academy. Naturally, the grounds and acres of gardens were letter perfect. Mrs. Banks was our host for lunch and then after saying goodbye to our gracious host and hostess we boarded our bus for Falkland Palace.

We had our choice of meeting the Dowager Countess of Elgin at Abbey House, but we chose Falkland Palace instead. The palace has been of great interest to me for several years as a result of my limited research into the lives of the Stewarts. The palace was built by James V, father of Mary, Queen of Scots. It was there that Robert, the son of James V, was born and died two days later. Had Robert lived the history of Scotland might have been far different than that of his sister Mary's reign. It was at Falkland that the dying James V, when informed that his queen had given birth to a daughter, cynically said, "Adieu, farewell, it came with a lass; it will pass with a lass." Thus alluding to the marriage of Marjorie Bruce and Walter

Stewart which founded the Stewart dynasty. Mary was fond of Falkland and spent many months hunting, riding, and playing golf. Of great interest to me was the great hall displaying the portraits of all the Stewarts and the lovely Catholic Chapel, still in its original motif, where Mary used to worship. This Chapel is still being used for services every Sunday. Unfortunately, Cromwell destroyed much of the palace as he did so many beautiful cathedrals and palaces throughout Scotland.

Then, on the bus back to Russell Hall, have a drink and change into formal evening wear.

Back on the bus at 7:45 enroute to the banquet at University Hall where we were to be instructed into the Scottish version of "having a blast."

To all the many occasions we were invited we received individual written invitations and, this being our first big event, we presented ourselves invitation in hand to the doorman and were ushered into the reception room where we met the faculty of the University for a wee bit of Scotch. At the call of "My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, dinner is served," we took our places at our assigned table seating six guests and a host and hostess from the faculty. While we were standing most respectfully by our chairs enjoying the normal idle chit-chat of nervous people who do not know what is coming next, we heard for the first time, of many more to come, the method Scots have of commanding attention. It consists of a person in livery standing to the rear of the head table pounding with a gavel on a sounding board. My first impression was that a carpenter was putting the final touches on a newly constructed table.

The gavel-wielder announced, "My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, her Excellency, the American Ambassador to the Court of St. James, the Honorable Anne Armstrong." Then Lord Ballantrae, the Chancellor of the University, Lord Kilmany, Lord Lieutenant of Fife and Dr. J. Steven Watson, Principal of the University walked toward the open doors next to my table, waited respectfully for a second and then Mrs. Armstrong with her husband and son entered the dining hall. This was the first time I had seen this lovely lady, but she was no stranger to me as I have been most impressed by her many outstanding accomplishments. It is easy to understand why Anne Armstrong is probably one of the most popular and respected ambassadors we have sent to the Court of St. James. It is impossible not to be impressed by her the first time you meet and this impression deepens with each meeting. In the many occasions when she was with us at the various dinners, banquets and operas we had several opportunities to become more acquainted and each time we learned to appreciate her more. Ambassador Armstrong then presented a large portrait of the late President Eisenhower to the University to commemorate Scotland's observance of our bicentennial. She then thanked those concerned who had invited so many Scottish Americans as guests during the three weeks' observance, and as one of Scottish descent, it was a very personal pleasure to be included.

When the guests at the head table had taken their places, the banquet, commemorating the signing of the American Declaration of Independence by Benjamin Franklin, James Wilson and John Witherspoon, all alumni of the university, the toasts, the hosts, the picturesque hall, the servants in livery and the Scotch which "flowed like buttermilk" made this first of many occasions to follow one to be treasured in memory. But above all---we now realized we were in "high society."

The foregoing will explain in some detail our first two days (16 and 17 August) as guests of Scotland and to continue the events of the following nineteen days and nights would fill a volume, so to complete the visit and to give the reader an insight of the details of the plan which took two years in the making, I will furnish a schedule of the days that followed.

18 August: Visit and lunch, Deware Blending Plant. Received a quart of Scotch; then to Arblair Castle, host Sir Laurence Blair. Available to visit Stobhall, hostess Countess of Perth or Dunfermline, host Marquess of Lansdowne. Dinner University of St. Andrew's.

19 August: Lecture "Origin of Scottish Names." Visit and lunch at the planned town of Glenrothes; then to Kinross House and Garden. Reception, dinner and "ceilidh" by members of Fife Regional Council, host Sir George Sharp.

20 August: Depart for Glasgow. Evening Theatre Royal, invitational performance of opera "Macbeth." Reception and dinner by Lord Provost and members of the Glasgow District Council.

21 August: Tour Glasgow; visit Burns trail; then to Culzean Castle; host, Sir Charles Fergusson of Kilkerron. Scottish evening...dinner and entertainment by Scotch Whiskey Association (this I will never forget).

22 August: Depart across Scotland to Edinburgh. Attended formal opening at St. Giles Festival Inagural Services (Ambassador Anne Armstrong read the epistle); Evening, Scottish National Orchestra. Reception and dinner as guests of Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

23 August: Depart for buying spree at Barries Knitwear Mill. Lunch guests of Borders Regional Council, evening fare--to sample the pubs.

24 August: Visit Linlithgow Palace, host Sir Robert McEwen; lunch, guests of Lothian District Council; visit Hopetown House, hostess, the Honorable Caroline Douglas-Home; Evening, King's Theatre to enjoy the festival opera "Le Nozze di Figaro." Dinner at the City Chambers, host, Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

27 August: Visit Monteviot for lunch as guests of the Marquess and Marchioness of Lothian; visit Harden as guests of Lord and Lady Polwarth. Evening free to sample Edinburgh's famous pubs.

28 August: Free day (Fashion Show available); evening, reception and dinner at Gostord House, Earl and Countess Wemyss. 10:30 p.m., depart for Edinburgh Tatoo. A wonderful evening to remember, especially when our 6th Infantry stole the performance from the other visiting international teams.

29 August: Visit Blair Castle and Scone Palace, host, the Duke of Atholl. Arrive 5:30 p.m. at Dunbar Hall, Aberdeen University. Evening free.

30 August: Visit Aberdeen. 4:30 p.m. reception at Cromond House, as guests of Lord Maitland Mackie, Her Majesty's Lieutenant for Aberdeenshire. Evening reception and dinner at Woodhill House as guests of the Convener of Grampian Regional Council. Formal Highland Dress.

31 August: Visit Culloden. At this point, Dr. and Mrs. MacGregor, Ann

and I, left the group to visit via train and bus the famous city of Inverness and Loch Ness to see the monster. The monster did not show. We returned to Aberdeen aboard the train that could have been used to open our West.

1 September: Discovered the supply of Alka Seltzer had been used, thereby forcing me to accept a degree of temperance. Depart for Glenlivet Distillery to receive another quart of Scotch. Then to Aboyne Highland Games, where I saw my first real highland games. They make our games look like a wake. Reception and dinner as guests of the lord Provost of Aberdeen.

2 September: Visit Grant's Distillery; Glens of Foundland; Huntley Castle. Dinner at University of Aberdeen. Evening, Her Majesty's Theater to see Andy Stewart's "Scotch Corner."

3 September: Free shopping day. Reception dinner and musical as guests of the University of Aberdeen. Formal Highland Dress.

4 September: Attend Her Majesty's Royal Highland Gathering at Braemar. This is the "Rose Bowl" of all the Highland games, and as her Majesty always attends, it gave us all an opportunity to be with the Queen, the Queen Mother and the Princess. After the games, we left the highlands and arrived at Stirling University.

5 September: Departed for Prestwick, where we had an almost tearful farewell to our host Colonel John Smith and his staff of guides, all of which had become very close and dear to us. We departed Scotland two hours late and, as I sat back in my most comfortable seat, sipping my first taste of bourbon in almost a month, my lovely daughter Ann whispered in my ear, "Daddy, don't cry, we will come back someday."

FORMAL NOTICE OF MEETING TO AMEND BY-LAWS

In accordance with Article VII of the By-Laws of Saint Andrew's Society in Williamsburg, Virginia, and by order of the President in conjunction with the Board of Directors, notice is hereby given that a General Meeting of the entire membership of the Society will be held on Jan. 29, 1977 (in conjunction with Burns' Night) at the Quality Inn Fort Magruder in Williamsburg. Proposed amendments, and reasons therefore, shall be mailed to each member at his address of record, at least 15 days prior to the vote upon the said amendments. The Secretary shall then receive any objections to or commentary in favor of the proposed amendments prior to voting.

Respectfully Submitted
Andrew J. Jurchenko, Sr., Secretary

EDITOR'S NOTE: Attached as an enclosure in this edition of the Virginia Highlander is a copy of the complete by-laws of our society....incorporating all the changes to be voted upon at the General Meeting. Although the original by-laws developed by Jim Whyte, John Donaldson, and Duncan Cocke at the direction of Bob Duncan were of superior structure, the "lessons learned" during the years of our existence brought forth the need for changes. We urge all members to review the document, constituting the official notification, prior to voting at the General Meeting and to retain it for future reference.

