



DUM SPIRO SPERO
WHILE I BREATHE, I HOPE.

MCLAN MACLENNAN

NEWSLETTER
CANADA

Central Ontario Branch

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

It seems that spring has finally arrived, although going out for a bike ride in the morning just about freezes your hands. I was up in Ottawa last week and got my nose sunburnt walking in a park! This is probably why parks and pools do not officially open until Victoria Day on May 21st. I am leaving for three weeks in Scotland the weekend before that holiday – you usually get good weather then and the hordes from Europe haven't arrived yet. I may not spend much time up north there but hope to have a side trip to Dublin to see how the "Irish Miracle" has changed that city. My last trip to Glasgow was a real eye-opener, because I had not seen it for 20 years. Where the river had been lined with shipyards in the 70's, only two were still in business, including Yarrow's Naval Yard, where I had served my apprenticeship.

Please note a change in the Games schedule – Hamilton has cancelled this year due to lack of funds but hopes to be back next year. Maybe the grant they were hoping to get went elsewhere - there are questions being asked of the Government as I am putting this together.

Two items in Scotland were mentioned at our Executive meeting, possibly connected with 2007 being named Scotland's Year of Highland Culture. Melanie noted that there are big restoration plans afoot for Culloden, including stones, inscribed with donor's names, on various paths on the battlefield. I know the MacLennans arrived too late for the battle but this touches all Highlanders and Melanie is following up. The second piece of news is that the Scottish National Trust has purchased the church at Aldearn to restore it as a museum commemorating those who died at the Battle of Aldearn in 1645, many of whom were MacLennans. The late Chief Ronnie's book mentions a very worn armorial stone high on the west gable wall honoring Chief Ruairidh MacLennan, who died there with his brothers Donald and Duncan. There is also a brass plaque at the nearby Boath Doocote, which also belongs to the National Trust. For those interested, Aldearn is about 20 miles from Inverness, just beyond Nairn on the coast road along the south side of the Moray Firth.

We had a note from Philip Holton (Vancouver) to say that his wife, Judy, passed away quietly on March 15th after a long struggle with breast cancer. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Philip, because this latest blow follows the deaths of his mother, Mary Holton, in 2004 and his aunt Flora Asseltine in 2005. We also heard that George MacLennan (Ripley) lost his wife Jeanne on Aug 25, 2004. Apparently she had a heart attack at Xmas, 03 and then another later, and George had looked after her.

I will spare you my usual rant about dues because the response to the last letter was electrifying. The list of holdouts was halved to roughly the same as we have most years, so I will refrain until the July issue which is the last one for the 2006-2007 financial year. One important item came out of the reminders – nine of the eighteen members contacted asked to receive their Newsletters by email. This may indicate a significant change since we asked the same question about 2-3 years ago and it will certainly help our bottom line. At the same time, we want to assure everyone that copies will still be mailed out to those who prefer to receive them that way.

If you would like to get your copy by email, please advise either Melanie or myself by sending an email to either of the addresses at the top of this page, just under the title.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

The Games schedule is repeated here, the only change being the omission of Hamilton, which will not be held this year.

British Columbia

Jun 9 Delta
Jun 30 Coquitlam
July 7 Penticton

Nova Scotia

Jun 31 Pugwash
July 7 Halifax
July 20-22 Antigonish
Aug 8-13 Pictou

Ontario

Jun 9 Georgetown
Jun 23 Coburg
Jul 1 Embro (London)
Jul 6-8 Kincardine
July 14 Chatham
July 20 Orillia
July 20-21 Cambridge
Jul 21-22 Uxbridge
Aug 3-4 Maxville
Aug 10-11 Fergus
Aug 25 Almonte

Bob and Elizabeth hope to take the tent to Georgetown and Ray and Lorna are going too. John and Barbara will be at Coburg and Cambridge. We will see how the logistics of having the tent at other locations can be worked out before we inflict a two- person job on anyone else. That is the beauty of going to Maxville- the clans are in a barn so we don't worry about either weather protection or visibility, only about banning PA systems or music of any kind. The trouble is that, while the Clans are an attraction for people at the Games, they do not attract revenue like the concession stands, which pay a fee. This means that asking for more visible space is a thorny subject.

If you are not used to going to Games, may I suggest you try a nearby venue at first. Most Games are on Saturdays and really are different from the usual sports. You can either sit or walk around as you like, the sports are not highly competitive and are fun to watch, like tug-o-war or caber tossing, and there are stands with a wide variety of goods. While I would hesitate to recommend Games for teenagers, younger kids usually enjoy them much more than a lot of other activities. A point to remember, once you

have paid to get in, you can leave for a time and come back later because a band on your wrist identifies payment for the day. You do not need to stay at the main field but can wander about as you please. Coffee, tea and soft drinks are available at a number of stalls, while beer is sold in designated areas. Parking is on a first come- first served basis and, for the handicapped, there is often a shuttle to get you where you want to go.

If you haven't been before, Games are nothing like a rock concert- people are relaxed, in no hurry to go anywhere and the vendors do not push their stuff. You can get cheap souvenirs to really fine crafted items, but I wouldn't advise buying a claymore- it might not fit in the car! Only the larger Games are listed here and the local papers usually have details of events in the area.

**Statement of receipts and Disbursements
August 1, 2006-April 21, 2007**

Receipts

Bank Balance Aug 1, 2006		1,650.83
Member's Dues		
-2005-2006	20.00	
-2006-2010	<u>420.00</u>	440.00
Clan Sales		
-Maxville	27.50	
- Fergus	<u>48.00</u>	75.50
Fergus Dinner Draw	70.00	
G.I.C. Interest	<u>42.00</u>	<u>627.50</u>
		<u>2278.33</u>

Disbursements

October/ March Newsletters		
-Copy	96.55	
-Postage	72.23	
-Envelopes	<u>9.11</u>	177.89
Service Charges		<u>4.00</u>
		<u>181.89</u>
Bank Balance March 17, 2007		2,096.44
Royal Bank G.I.C.		<u>2,000.00</u>
Branch Total		4,096.44

Membership

Owing 2006-2007	18
Paid 2006-2007	39
Paid 2007-2010	15
Comp.	<u>3</u>
Total	75

Writing A Family History - Part 1 By: David MacLennan(Ottawa)

A lot of people think that genealogy is just a dry list of names and dates. However, with the simple addition of personal memories and family stories, genealogy can be much more than that.

I only wish that I had this passion for family history when I was younger. The reason of course, now that I am in my 60's, few of the older generation are alive to relay our history to me. Fortunately through my own research and using the internet, I have been able to find distant cousins who have some information AND PICTURES that have helped me tremendously in piecing our family history together.

I certainly can't take any credit for the following ideas, they have come from personal experience but most from others. They are also not new by any means but they do make a lot of sense in making your research simpler and much more efficient.

Buried in the memories of your relatives are stories just waiting to be told! Even in your own mind, there are memories worth preserving. A tape-recorded interview is an excellent way to preserve these stories and memories. A tape-recorded interview has the additional benefit of preserving the person's voice for posterity. Here are a few tips to use in a tape- recorded interview.

- Sit where there won't be a lot of background noise that will be picked up on the tape.
- Make sure that your tape recorder is in good working order. If you are using batteries, check to make sure you have spares.
- Some people are intimidated with the idea of speaking into a tape recorder, so place it off to one side while they are talking.
- Please reassure whom you are interviewing that they will be given credit for the information given to you. A sense of ownership sometimes helps with the discussion.
- The bottom line; this information is to be used for further research to validate the facts and it will allow you a working benchmark.

Believe it or not, every family has skeletons in the closet, and some may not want to talk about those things or have them generally known. It is possible for facts to be withheld from copies of the family history that are circulated to others for a specified period time or until after a certain event (like the death of someone, or the death of everyone in a certain generation). But by writing down the story now you can be certain that it will not be lost for all time.

The Latter Day Saints is a religious group that has dedicated itself to preserving our ancestors. You don't have to be a church member to receive family history information from their huge archives in Salt Lake City. The archives include articles on appropriate ways to research your family as well as information on hundreds of millions of individuals worldwide. I have worked with the local LDS center for years and have found them to be dedicated in assisting me in my own research.

The November 1973 issue of "The New Era", an LDS magazine, carried an article written by William G. Harley entitled, "Suggested Family Oral History Topics" on page 21. The article includes an excellent outline that you can use to help you organize yourself. It is available online by going to the Latter Day Saint site at <http://www.lds.org/search/>

In addition, to entering, "Suggested Family Oral History Topics" in the "Search the Gospel Library Archive" box. You may also be able to get a copy of this article at your local LDS Family History Center. If you are unable to get a copy there you can request a copy from: Library Reference, Historical Department, 50 E North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-3800.

You may find using an outline the easiest way to write a biography or do an oral history interview. While the list may seem long at first look, you will find that the general topics will help the person remember many stories. This outline is just a general guide to help you develop specific questions for the person you are interviewing.

Remember you want details, as many and as specific as possible. When talking about their childhood home, encourage them to remember details of what it was like e.g.

- What type of house was it? How many bedrooms?
- Did they share a bedroom or even a bed with others?
- What type of yard did they have?
- What type of neighborhood was it?
- What types of appliances were there in their house?

You are a reporter digging for facts, follow your instincts and satisfy your curiosity when asking questions. Even if you fear that you will not have enough time to cover everything, don't put off asking questions. Every little bit that you can record now is something that will not be lost. Secondly, several short interviews are better than one marathon interview anyway.

As always, for those that are right into the research and want to share with the rest of the Clan, please get in touch with me with problems, solutions or both at dmac44@rogers.com Until then, happy hunting.

Yours in Kinship - Dave

THE EVOLUTION OF THE KILT-PART 2 The FEILIDH-BEAG

(Condensed from articles in The Scottish Banner, Aug.- Oct 2006, by Matthew Newsome, FSA Scot.,GTS.)

The mini series on the development of the kilt began with a treatment of the *feilidh-mhor* (literally “large wrap”), the grandfather of the modern kilt. This topic will be the father of the kilt, the *feilidh-beag* (literally “small wrap”) often anglicized as “phillabeg”.

Whereas the old *feilidh-mhor* was made up of about four yards of material that was some 50” to 60” wide, gathered into folds and belted at the waist, the *feilidh-beag* was simply the lower half of this garment. Still some four yards long, the *feilidh-beag* was made from a single width of tartan, usually 25” to 30” wide selvedge-to-selvedge, gathered into folds and belted at the waist. The bottom would come to the knees and the top few inches would overlap the belt and keep the whole thing in place. A simpler form of kilt would be hard to imagine.

However, the original *feilidh-beag* was not a tailored kilt at all. Like the *feilidh-mhor*, it was loosely gathered and not formally pleated. The pleating was certainly not stitched down! At certain times one might have seen a *feilidh-beag* with the pleats tacked in with a line of stitching at the waist only, or possibly keepers sewn in to facilitate wear; but by and large the *feilidh-beag* was a completely untailored garment. The fact that the *feilidh-beag* was a garment distinct from the modern tailored kilt can be seen in the early records of the Gordon Highland Regiment. Early in the year 1794, records indicate that four yards of cloth were supplied to soldiers for a *feilidh-beag* but later, in that same year, records show 3 1/2 yards being supplied for a kilt. These were two distinct and separate garments. Much speculation has taken place about the origin of the *feilidh-beag*. We know for certain that by the time of the 1745 Jacobite uprising, it was in fairly common usage.

The most oft-repeated tale of the origin of the *feilidh-beag* involves an Englishman named Thomas Rawlinson. Evidence for Rawlinson’s involvement comes largely from a letter written in 1768, by a Mr. Ivan Baillie of Aberichan (on Loch Ness). We do not know who the letter was addressed to, but it answered an inquiry as to the history of the “*felie-beg*” (as he spells it). I quote from the letter:

“About 50 years ago, one Thomas Rawlinson, an Englishman, conducted an ironwork carried on in the counties of Glengarie and Lochaber; he had a throng of Highlanders employed in the service, and became very fond of the Highland dress, and wore it in the neatest form; for which I can aver, as I became personally acquainted with him above 40 years ago. He was a man of genius and quick parts, and thought it no great stretch of invention to abridge the dress, and make it handy and convenient for his workmen: and accordingly directed the using of the lower part plaited of what is called the *felie* or kilt as above, and the upper part was set aside; and this piece of dress, so modeled as a diminutive of the former, was in the Gaelic termed *felie-beg*... and it was found so handy and convenient that, in the shortest space, the use of it became frequent in all the Highland counties, and in many of our northern Low Countries also.”

More details about Rawlinson are supplied by John Sobieski Stuart and Charles Edward Stuart, in their 1845 work, *Costumes of the Clans*. According to the Stuart brothers, shortly after the year 1715, Rawlinson came to Glengarry to manage an iron foundry. He took to wearing Highland dress and had a great fondness for it. One day he was visited by a soldier and regimental tailor named Parkinson. Mr. Parkinson observed one of the Highland workers sit down by the fire in his wet and steaming *feilidh-mhor* and asked why the gentleman did not take off his cloak. When he was told that he could not, for it was in one piece with his kilt, Mr. Parkinson had the idea to separate the upper and lower halves of the garment, so that the upper part might be put aside and the wearer remain dressed. Within two days Rawlinson was wearing the *feilidh-beag*. It was apparently such a hit that the style was adopted by the chief of the MacDonnells of Glengarry, and so the fashion spread.

I, for one, see no reason to doubt the Rawlinson story. It seems fairly well documented and entirely plausible. However, see no reason to believe that this was the first occurrence of the *feilidh-beag*. After all, as we saw in our last part, the old *feilidh-mhor* was made from two single-width lengths of cloth stitched together in the middle. So the invention of the *feilidh-beag* does not so much involve cutting the *feilidh-mhor* in half as it does in neglecting to sew the two lengths together. It only makes sense. The large *feilidh-mhor* is perfect for outdoor pursuits, especially in the inclement Highland weather. But for indoor activity, especially around machinery, it is far too cumbersome. The *feilidh-beag* is simply more practical. So as the Highlands became more industrialized, and men took to work in places such as iron foundries, their mode of dress shifted.

This would lead, by the end of the eighteenth century, to the development of the tailored kilt. This we will pick up in the next part.