

Newsletter


CEANGAL CHLANN NA H-ALBA



Vol. 8


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Clan Events

 52nd Annual Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk - December 2, 2023
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Old Town Alexandria

 Clan MacLeod USA Winter Meeting
December 3, 2023
Old Town Alexandria, USA

 Daylesford Highland Gathering
December 2, 2023
Daylesford, VIC
Australia

 Jenny Mair Highland Square Day
December 9, 2023
Palmerston North, New Zealand,

 Scottish Hogmanay Walk
December 31, 2023
Portsmouth, Virginia

 Hogmanay - December 31

100 Years on Skye: The Minginish Centenary Story

In June 2024, the Minginish Centenary Project on Skye will mark a significant historical event: 100 years since the resettlement of the Minginish peninsula. This anniversary commemorates the aftermath of the Highland Clearances, a period characterized by mass evictions and emigration due to sheep farming. The Centenary Project celebrates the 1920s' reversal of this trend, when the government acquired land from the Macleods of Dunvegan Castle to establish new crofts for returning World War I servicemen, leading to the resettlement of 68 families from Harris, Lewis, and

Skye. These events formed a resilient and unified community, which persists to this day. The June 2024 celebrations, including cultural events and a memorial unveiling, honor this enduring spirit of communal strength and the deep connection to their land and heritage.



World's Oldest Whisky Found in Blair Castle

In a breathtaking discovery that marries history with a touch of liquid gold, Blair Castle, the ancestral home of the Clan Murray, has unveiled what is believed to be the world's oldest whisky. Nestled within the serene highlands, Blair Castle, a historical landmark and a symbol of Scottish heritage, has been the keeper of countless secrets over the centuries. This latest find, however, surpasses all in its sheer historical magnitude and cultural significance.

The discovery came about during a routine renovation of the castle's ancient cellars. Hidden behind a forgotten wall, a dusty, cobweb-laden bottle emerged, its contents still intact. Expert analysis revealed



the whisky to be over 300 years old, predating even the oldest known bottles in existence. This extraordinary find is not just a bottle of whisky; it's a time capsule that captures the essence of Scottish distilling traditions from an era long gone.

The craftsmanship of the bottle and the quality of the whisky speak volumes about the skills of our ancestors. It's a testament to the

time when Clan Murray played a pivotal role in shaping Scotland's distilling history. The label, barely legible, hints at a story of a special brew, perhaps reserved for the nobility or significant clan gatherings. Its preservation through tumultuous times is nothing short of a miracle.

This discovery holds more than just historical significance; it's a symbol of Scottish resilience and the enduring legacy of our clan. The castle plans to display the bottle in a special exhibit, allowing visitors from around the world to witness this incredible piece of history.

Egyptian Treasure Buried at Clan Melville's Castle Melville: A Historical Enigma Unraveled

In the picturesque landscape of Fife County, Scotland, lies Castle Melville, a stately manor with a history as rich as the treasures it concealed. The castle, a heritage of the esteemed Clan Melville, became the epicenter of an archaeological enigma when a collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts was unearthed on its grounds. This discovery, spanning over three decades, has finally found its explanation, weaving a tale that transcends continents and centuries.

The saga began in 1952 when a young Scottish schoolboy, carrying out a punitive task of digging potatoes, stumbled upon a red sandstone statue head. This remarkable find marked the first of a series of discoveries that would eventually include 18 Egyptian artifacts. These pieces, dating from 1069 B.C. to 30 B.C., encompassed a wide array of items, from a masterfully sculpted statue head, considered a "masterpiece of Egyptian sculpture", to bronze and ceramic figurines, including a representation of the goddess Isis nursing her son Horus.

For years, these artifacts remained an enigmatic presence at Castle Melville. How did these relics from a civilization thousands of miles away end up in the serene Scottish countryside? The answer lay hidden in the annals of the Melville family history.

In a remarkable turn of events, researchers unveiled the journey of these artifacts to Castle Melville. The key figure in this historical puzzle

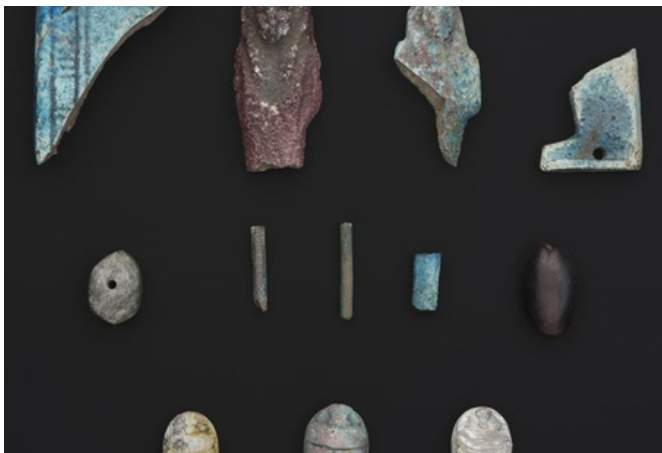


was Alexander Leslie-Melville, Lord Balgonie, the young heir to the estate. In 1856, Lord Balgonie embarked on a voyage to Egypt, a land that had captivated the imaginations of Europeans during the 19th century. During his travels, it is believed that he acquired these artifacts, a common practice among tourists and collectors of that era.

Tragically, Lord Balgonie passed away a year after his return to the United Kingdom. The Egyptian collection, possibly stored in an outbuilding, was forgotten over time and eventually buried – quite literally – in obscurity. It wasn't until the mid-20th century that these treasures resurfaced, thanks to the accidental discoveries at the castle grounds.

The story of these artifacts is not just a tale of archaeological wonder but also a reflection of the 19th-century fascination with antiquities. Their journey from the sands of Egypt to the soil of Scotland encapsulates a period when the collecting of ancient relics was a symbol of status and intellectual curiosity.

Today, these artifacts reside at the National Museums Scotland, serving as a testament to the intertwined histories of two distinct cultures. The tale of the Egyptian treasure at Clan Melville's Castle Melville is a fascinating narrative, shedding light on the complex history of antiquities collecting and the enduring allure of ancient civilizations.



Clan Macdonell vs. Clan MacKenzie Famous Clan Feud

In the late 16th century, the Scottish Highlands witnessed a fierce and enduring feud between the Macdonell of Glengarry and the Clan Mackenzie, primarily ignited by land disputes. The conflict began when the Macdonell chief inherited lands in Wester Ross, encroaching on Mackenzie territory. Tensions escalated when two Macdonell clan members avenged their father's murder by burning down the murderer's house, unintentionally killing a Mackenzie clansman, Donald Mackenzie, in the process.

This incident led Kenneth Mackenzie, the Mackenzie chief, to seek justice from the Privy Council in Edinburgh. In response to the Council's orders being defied by the Macdonells, the Mackenzies were granted a Commission of Fire

and Sword, authorizing them to pursue revenge. This sanction led to a brutal cycle of attacks, beginning with the Mackenzie invasion of Glengarry lands in Morar, where Angus Macdonell was mortally wounded. The conflict continued with the Macdonells' retaliatory attacks on Mackenzie territories in Applecross, Lochalsh, and Lochcarron, resulting in significant losses on both sides, including the young Macdonell chief.

Exasperated by the ongoing violence, the Privy Council finally intervened, forcing both clans to commit to peace. The resolution came when



the Macdonells renounced their claims to lands in Ross-shire, bringing the bitter and bloody feud to a close.

Historic Clan Castles of Scotland



Abergeldie Castle

Aberdeenshire, Scotland

Nestled on the south bank of the River Dee in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, the majestic Abergeldie Castle stands as a striking embodiment of Scottish heritage. Constructed around 1550, this four-floor tower house is not just an architectural marvel but also a symbol of the enduring legacy of the Gordon clan. Built by Sir Alexander Gordon



of Midmar, a descendant of the illustrious first Earl of Huntly, Abergeldie Castle is intrinsically linked to the Gordon family, who acquired the land in 1482.

Over the centuries, the castle has witnessed significant historical events, particularly during the turbulent Jacobite risings. During these uprisings, Abergeldie played a pivotal role, enduring sieges and hosting various garrisons. Its walls echo the stories of a nation's struggle and resilience.

In the 19th century, the castle garnered royal attention when Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's consort, leased the estate. This royal connection added a new chapter to the castle's history, serving as a summer retreat for the British monarchy.

Today, Abergeldie Castle, a category A listed building, stands as a testament to Scotland's feudal past and the Gordon clan's enduring influence. Its well-preserved interior and rumored resident ghost add layers of intrigue to its already fascinating history. For history enthusiasts and clan members alike, Abergeldie offers a unique glimpse into the Scottish past.

The Sobieski Stuarts

Highland Heroes or Highland Imposters?

The Sobieski Stuarts, brothers John and Charles Allan, were notable figures in 19th-century Scotland, known for their intriguing blend of myth and history. Born as John Hay Allan (1797-1872) and Charles Hay Allan (1799-1880), they adopted the names John Sobieski Stolberg Stuart and Charles Edward Stuart, claiming descent from the Stuart kings, a lineage never conclusively proven but central to their identity. Their dedication to Gaelic culture was profound. They mastered the Gaelic language and deeply immersed themselves in the traditions and folklore of the Scottish Highlands. Their literary contributions, including poems and historical sketches, displayed a deep understanding of and love for Gaelic culture.

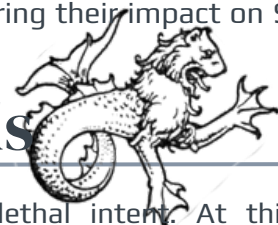
The brothers' most controversial work was the "Vestiarium Scoticum" (1842), a supposed historical document on Scottish clan tartans, later denounced as a forgery. This work and the debate over its authenticity significantly



impacted Scottish cultural history.

The Sobieski Stuarts led lives reminiscent of romantic novels. Residing on the river-island Eilean Aigas, they surrounded themselves with ancient armor and relics, reflecting their fascination with the past. Notably, they wore Highland dress and the Stuart tartan, emphasizing their connection to Scottish heritage.

Devout Roman Catholics, their later years saw John passing away without issue, while Charles died in France, leaving behind descendants. Their legacy goes beyond their royal claims, marking them as important figures in preserving Scottish Gaelic culture and traditions. Their story, blending fact and fiction, continues to captivate historians and enthusiasts, underscoring their impact on Scotland's cultural heritage.



Scottish Clan Myths and Legends

Turning the Bull

The Brave Beginnings of Clan Turnbull

The legend of William Rule and the charging bull is a captivating tale from Scottish history, central to the origins of Clan Turnbull. Set in the medieval era in Teviotdale, a tumultuous region along the Scotland-England border, the story unfolds amidst a backdrop of conflict and strife. The legend begins with King Robert Bruce, who finds himself in grave danger within the dense Caledon woods. A massive, enraged bull

charges at him with lethal intent. At this critical juncture, William Rule, a servant of the Bruce family, displays extraordinary courage. In a moment of remarkable bravery, Rule confronts the bull head-on. He seizes the animal by its horns and, through a combination of immense strength and sheer determination, wrestles it to the ground, thereby saving the king's life.

Impressed and grateful for this selfless act of heroism, King Robert Bruce rewards Rule generously. He grants him a significant tract of land as a token of appreciation. More importantly, Rule undergoes a symbolic transformation with a change in his name. From that moment on, he is known as William Turnbull, a name signifying his brave deed of turning the bull.

This incident not only marks the birth of Clan Turnbull but also embodies the qualities of bravery and audacity that come to define the clan's legacy. The Turnbills adopt the bull as their emblem, representing their unyielding spirit and defiance.



The Battle of Achnashellach, 1505

Famous Clan Battle

In 1505, the Scottish Highlands were the backdrop for the Battle of Achnashellach, an event shrouded in mystery and clan rivalries. This historical confrontation involved Clan Cameron and an alliance of Clan Mackay and Clan Munro. Central to the battle's narrative is the demise of Sir William Munro of Foulis, a notable figure in Scottish history, serving as the Justiciary and Lieutenant of Inverness

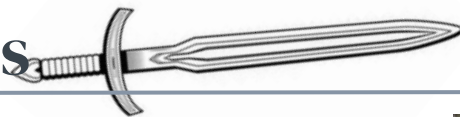


and the Earldom of Ross. Although Clan Munro's records acknowledge his death during this period, details are sparse, only indicating his engagement in "King's business" at the time.

The battle's portrayal varies in historical accounts: Clan Cameron's tradition claims their victory, yet this lacks contemporary evidence. A 17th-century account by Alexander Munro of Obsdale suggests Sir William Munro fell victim to treachery while commanding a royal army against northern adversaries. Further, the 19th-century "Memoirs of Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel" mention a feud between the Camerons and the Mackays, marking the death of the Munro chief in a clash between the clans.

Despite these diverse narratives, the exact events, roles of the Munros and Mackays, and the overall context of the Battle of Achnashellach remain unclear. This episode in Scottish clan history highlights the complexities in reconstructing past events, especially when relying on later accounts and clan traditions instead of contemporary documentation.

Scottish Clan Artifacts



The Cursing Stone

In the heart of Carlisle, a city rich in historical narratives, stands a remarkable monument known as the Cursing Stone. Erected in 2000, this stone commemorates the turbulent era of the Border Reivers and the infamous Monition of Cursing issued by Archbishop Gavin Dunbar in 1525. This unique relic of history has become a subject of both fascination and controversy.

The Border Reivers were notorious raiders along the Anglo-Scottish border from the 13th to the 17th century, known for their lawless and turbulent lifestyle. To counteract their persistent raids, Archbishop Dunbar pronounced a comprehensive curse against these outlaws. This curse, intended to instill fear and restore order, was an extensive denunciation, covering all aspects

of the Reivers' existence. Fast forward to the 21st century, the Cursing Stone was installed as a tribute to this intriguing past. Inscribed with a portion of Dunbar's curse, the stone serves as a reminder of the region's



tumultuous history. However, it has also been a focal point of superstition. Following its installation, Carlisle suffered a series of misfortunes, including devastating floods in 2005 and other economic woes. These events led to a belief among some locals that the stone brought bad luck, sparking debates about its removal. Interestingly, the city council responded by adding a biblical verse for counteraction, reflecting the community's engagement with its historical artifact.

Highland Games and Festivals

January 2024

Waipu Highland Games
January 1
Waipu Waipu
[New Zealand](#)

Florida Keys Celtic Festival
January 6
Marathon Community Par, Marathon Fl.
United States

Boston Celtic Music Festival
January 11
Boston, MA
United States

**Central Florida Scottish
Highland Games**
January 13
Central Winds Park, Winter Springs, Fl.
United States

Turakina Highland Games
January 27
Turakina Domain, Turakina,
[New Zealand](#)

Tales of Forgotten Scottish History



DELVE INTO THE PAST WITH 'TALES OF FORGOTTEN SCOTTISH HISTORY,' A CAPTIVATING NEWSLETTER THAT UNVEILS THE HIDDEN NARRATIVES AND UNTOLD STORIES FROM THE RICH TAPESTRY OF SCOTLAND'S PAST. UNEARTHING FORGOTTEN HEROES, ENIGMATIC LEGENDS, AND OVERLOOKED EVENTS, THIS NEWSLETTER BRINGS TO LIGHT THE INTRIGUING AND OFTEN OVERLOOKED ASPECTS OF SCOTTISH HISTORY.

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Featured Clan Crest



CREST: A pelican Argent, winged Or, in her nest feeding her young Proper

MOTTO: Virescit Vulnere Virtus

TRANSLATION: Courage grows strong at a wound

The Stewart clan, originally seneschals in Brittany, France, relocated to Scotland under Walter Flaad at David I's invitation. Walter, appointed Steward of Scotland, established the clan's Scottish roots. Their significance in Scotland's history is marked by key events: their crucial role in defeating Somerled of the Isles in 1164, allegiance shifts during Scottish-English conflicts, and the establishment of the Stewart dynasty with Robert II's reign. Despite internal power struggles and political challenges, their rule extended until Queen Anne's death in 1714, leaving a lasting legacy.

About Us

Our Scottish clan newsletter is a publication dedicated to exploring the rich history and culture of the Scottish clans. As a community of proud Scots, we are passionate about preserving and sharing our heritage with the world.

We are committed to celebrating the unique character and identity of each Scottish clan, highlighting their achievements, and exploring their place in Scottish history. Whether you are a member of a clan, a descendant, or simply a lover of Scottish culture, our newsletter has something for you



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