

The Mystery of Robert Fergusson's Newly Found Portrait

A recent discovery at Barnbogle Castle near Edinburgh has sparked excitement among literary and art historians alike: an 18th-century portrait that may depict Robert Fergusson, one of Scotland's most influential poets. Professor Gerard Carruthers of the University of Glasgow examined the painting, which could represent a previously unknown lifetime likeness of Fergusson, who tragically passed away at the age of 24 in 1774. This find is particularly significant, as only three known depictions of Fergusson from his era have been documented.

The painting's provenance is intriguing. It was once part of the collection of Archibald Philip Primrose, the 5th Earl of Rosebery, a descendant of Clan Primrose. Fergusson's ties to Scottish identity resonate deeply with the clan system, as his poetry celebrated the Scots language and culture—a tradition intertwined with clan heritage. His contemporary, James Cummyng, a herald painter and Cape Club member, is a leading candidate for the portrait's artist. Cummyng's official role in regulating

Scottish coats of arms may explain the heraldic flourishes framing the painting. Fergusson's influence extended to Robert Burns, who regarded him as a muse. This rediscovered portrait, unveiled during the 250th anniversary of Fergusson's death, not only honors his legacy but also underscores the enduring cultural connections between Scotland's literary and clan histories.



Discover the Story of Clan

Logan: A Journey to Find a Chief

BagTownClans.com, in partnership with the Clan Logan Society, is proud to present Clan Logan: The Search for a Chief, a six-part podcast series launching in the first week of January 2025. This series explores the fascinating journey of one of Scotland's historic clans as they seek to restore a recognized chief after centuries of uncertainty.

Drawing on insights from historians and Logan descendants, the podcast delves into the clan's storied past, its ties to knights and Norse settlers, and its enduring motto, Hoc Majorum Virtus ("This is the valour of my ancestors"). Whether you're a member of Clan Logan or simply curious about

Scotland's rich heritage, this series promises to offer a deep and engaging look at the challenges and triumphs of reclaiming tradition in the modern age.

If you've subscribed to The Scottish Clan Connection, you'll receive an email notification as soon as the first episode is available. Stay tuned, and get ready to explore the history and resilience of Clan Logan, starting this January!



New Insights and Discoveries from the Glencoe Dig

Archaeologists continue to unravel the layered history of Glencoe, bringing forth remarkable discoveries that enrich our understanding of the infamous Glencoe Massacre and the centuries of life that preceded and followed it. New findings, coupled with innovative storytelling techniques, are shedding light on how the people of Glencoe lived, adapted, and preserved their culture amidst profound challenges.

In collaboration with Derek Alexander, head of archaeology at the National Trust for Scotland, the University of Glasgow team has delved deeper into the rich soils and stories of the glen. Recent excavations have unearthed evidence of long-forgotten pathways connecting settlements, indicating a network of travel and communication within the community. These paths, pressed into the land by countless footsteps, weave through fields, gardens, and hearths, revealing the physical traces of lives lived in harmony with the landscape.

One of the most compelling finds is an intricately carved spindle whorl unearthed near a hearth in a long-abandoned dwelling. This artifact is a testament to the skill and creativity of the women who spun wool and crafted textiles, keeping the community clothed and warm. The discovery of charred wood and ash layers in nearby areas suggests communal activities, such as seasonal feasts and gatherings, where stories, songs, and traditions were shared. A recently uncovered midden—a waste disposal site—contains fragments of animal bones, pottery, and oyster shells. These remains paint a vivid picture of a community that not only farmed but also engaged in trade and seasonal hunting. The presence of luxury items like wine bottle fragments and imported ceramics from Spain and Italy further underscores Glencoe's connection to broader trade networks, challenging outdated notions of isolation.

A new series of soil analyses has revealed the care with which generations of Glencoe's inhabitants tended their land. In fields near Achnacon, archaeologists have identified layers of carefully enriched soil used for growing barley, oats, and root vegetables.



These findings offer a poignant counterpoint to the devastation wrought by the massacre, illustrating the resilience of a people who adapted to their environment with ingenuity and tenacity.

Among the most surprising discoveries are small brass buttons and fragments of tartan fabric. These personal items, likely lost during daily activities, provide an intimate connection to individuals who lived in the shadow of the glen's dramatic peaks. Such artifacts serve as a reminder of the humanity that persevered even in times of great hardship.

The team is also making strides in bringing these stories to the public. A new series of immersive audio installations transports visitors back to a bustling Glen Coe. Sounds of sheep and cattle, the rhythmic clatter of spinning wheels, and the haunting strains of Gaelic songs bring the past vividly to life. These experiences aim to deepen visitors' emotional connection to the landscape and the people who once called it home.

Educational initiatives are also flourishing. Students are actively involved in creating digital content, including short films and podcasts, to share the glen's history in dynamic and engaging ways. These efforts ensure that the lessons of Glencoe are passed on to new generations, inspiring resilience and a deeper appreciation of Scotland's rich cultural heritage.

As the excavation continues, the team is uncovering not only artifacts but also stories that resonate far beyond the glen. From the quiet traces of everyday life to the dramatic events of the massacre, each discovery adds another thread to the tapestry of Glencoe's history.

Clan MacFarlane vs. Clan Colquhoun

Famous Clan Battle

The feud between Clan Macfarlane and Clan Colquhoun began in 1590, when the Macfarlanes raided Colquhoun territory in the Glens of Luss, stealing livestock and property. Initially, these raids faced little resistance, but tensions escalated in 1592 with the Bannachra raid. In July 1592, Chief John Macfarlane led a large group of Macfarlanes, supported by Clan MacGregor, to plunder the fields of Luss. Sir Humphry Colquhoun rallied his men and allies to defend the land. A fierce battle ensued, but the Colquhouns were overpowered and retreated to Bannachra Castle. The Macfarlanes pursued and besieged the castle. According to legend, a servant betrayed the Colquhoun chief by marking his position with a torch, allowing a Macfarlane archer to fatally shoot him. The castle fell, its defenders were killed, and it was

set ablaze. Although the Colquhouns appealed for justice, the Macfarlanes faced no consequences. The traitorous servant, however, was executed in 1593.

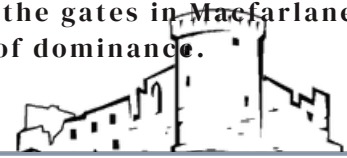
Hostilities reignited in 1603 with the Glen Finlas raid. The Macfarlanes attacked Bannachra Castle again, killing servants and burning it down.

When the Colquhouns demanded their return, the Macfarlanes mockingly replied, "If you want the gates, come and take them away."



The Colquhouns assembled their men and marched to confront the Macfarlanes. Caught off guard, the Macfarlane chief escaped by hiding in the thickets. Despite rallying their clansmen with their war cry, "Loch Slay," the Colquhouns were forced to retreat into the woods, leaving the gates in Macfarlane hands as a symbol of dominance.

Historic Clan Castles of Scotland



Kinnaird Castle

Angus, Scotland

Kinnaird Castle, an enduring symbol of Scottish heritage, is built from pale pink-brown freestone quarried on its estate, topped with greenish Westmoreland slates, and accented with intricate iron railings. Its origins date back to the 15th century, when it served as a

fortified tower house for the Carnegie family, later elevated to the Earls of Southesk. Over centuries, it evolved into the elegant structure seen today, with extensive remodeling in the 19th century transforming it into a grand baronial residence.

The castle's north entrance leads to an 80-foot oak-paneled gallery adorned with hunting trophies, culminating in a staircase ascending to a vibrant vermilion-painted corridor. The principal rooms reflect the family's artistic and literary legacy, including a dining room lined with ancestral portraits, drawing rooms displaying Italian and Dutch masterpieces, and a library housing 8,000 rare volumes. The ground floor comprises offices, cellars, a billiard room, and a smoking room, while the upper floors host bedrooms.

Strategically perched fifty feet above a valley on a gravel plateau, Kinnaird Castle commands sweeping views of the Carcary and Bounyton ranges to the south, the Grampian Mountains to the north, and the expansive Monrommon Moor to the west.



Walter Leslie

Walter Leslie (1607–1667) was a Scottish soldier and diplomat who rose to prominence within the Habsburg Monarchy during the Thirty Years' War. Born into the noble Clan Leslie in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, he began his military career as a mercenary, eventually attaining the rank of Imperial Field Marshal and being ennobled as a Count of the Holy Roman Empire.

Leslie's legacy is notably marked by his involvement in the assassination of Albrecht von Wallenstein, the Imperial generalissimo, in 1634. Wallenstein had been suspected of disloyalty to Emperor Ferdinand II, and Leslie, along with other Scottish and Irish officers, played a pivotal role in his assassination. This act significantly advanced Leslie's career, leading to his elevation within the imperial ranks.

Beyond his military exploits, Leslie was also active in diplomatic circles. He served as the Imperial Ambassador to Naples and Rome in 1645, and later to Constantinople from 1665 to 1666. His diplomatic missions were crucial in maintaining and negotiating the



Habsburgs' foreign relations during a tumultuous period in European history. Despite his achievements, Leslie's legacy is tarnished by his role in Wallenstein's assassination. While some contemporaries viewed the act as a necessary measure to protect the empire, others saw it as a betrayal that cast a shadow over Leslie's character. This duality has led to a complex historical assessment of his contributions, with his military and diplomatic successes often weighed against the moral implications of his involvement in Wallenstein's death.

Scottish Clan Myths and Legends



The Curse of Thomas Mackay

In the rugged highlands of 15th-century Scotland, Thomas Mackay's story became a dark chapter in the lore of Clan Mackay. Known for his defiance, Thomas committed an act of sacrilege that shocked his kin and drew the ire of King James I. Outlawed and shunned, he found himself hunted not only by royal decree but also by his own clan. Betrayal struck when two of his brothers sided with Angus Murray of Cubin, a neighboring leader eager to curry favor with the Earl of Sutherland.

Thomas was captured and executed, his death a grim spectacle. Yet the betrayal would not go unpunished. The brothers who aided his downfall accompanied Murray on an invasion of Strathnaver, only to face swift retribution. In the Battle of Druim na Cuip, led by the young Iain Aberach Mackay, the invaders were decisively defeated, and the betrayers met their end.

As the legend goes, Thomas's sacrilegious



act unleashed a curse upon the clan, leading to years of feuds and bloodshed. The tale reflects the Highland ethos: loyalty, honor, and the belief that betrayal is a sin punished not only by men but by fate itself. Today, "The Curse of Thomas Mackay" endures as a haunting reminder of the clan's turbulent past.

The Battle of Craig Cailloch, 1441

The Battle of Craig Cailloch was a clan battle fought in 1441 between the Clan Cameron and Clan Mackintosh, who were part of the Chattan Confederation, in Scotland. The conflict arose in the aftermath of the war between James I of Scotland and Alexander of Islay, Earl of Ross, which had ended with Alexander's defeat and imprisonment in 1429. Both Clan Cameron and Clan Chattan had initially sided with James during the war, but following Alexander's release and appointment as Justiciar of Scotia in 1439, he reconciled with the Chattans and encouraged them to attack the Camerons, whom he viewed as traitors.

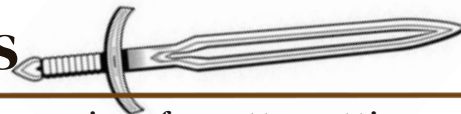
The battle took place at Craig Cailloch, a location in the Brae of Badenoch, and was led by Ewan, the son of Donald McEwan for the Camerons, and Malcolm Mackintosh for the Chattans. It was a bloody encounter, in which several leading members of the Chattan Confederation, including Lachlan Badenoch, were wounded or killed. Despite this, the Chattans emerged victorious and launched further raids on Cameron lands in Lochaber in revenge for the deaths of their members.



As a result of the battle, the leader of Clan Cameron, Donald Dubh, was forced into exile in Ireland, forfeiting his lands at Locheil. The long-standing enmity between the Earl of Ross and the clans may have contributed to this outcome.

The Battle of Craig Cailloch was a significant event in the history of the Clan Cameron and Clan Mackintosh in Scotland, and its aftermath had lasting consequences for the clans involved. It serves as a reminder of the complex and often violent relationships between the various clans that existed in Scotland during this period, and the significant role that political and personal allegiances played in shaping these conflicts. Overall, the battle was a bloody and violent encounter that had significant consequences for the clans involved.

Scottish Clan Artifacts



The Black Book of Glenoe

The Black Book of Glenoe, or Leabhar Dubh Ghlinn-Nodha, is one of Scotland's most intriguing lost artifacts, shrouded in mystery and historical significance. Once believed to hold the genealogies, songs, and stories of Clan MacIntyre, it served as a vital link to the clan's heritage, preserved by seanachies who safeguarded its secrets through centuries of tumultuous Highland history. The book, described as a manuscript of immense cultural importance, has vanished without a trace, its fate sparking speculation and curiosity among historians and descendants alike.

Was it lost during the clan's financial struggles in the 18th or 19th century, as Glenoe slipped from MacIntyre hands? Was it destroyed during the chaos of the Jacobite Risings or the suppression of Highland culture? Or could it be hidden, tucked away

in a forgotten attic or private collection, waiting to be rediscovered? Each theory deepens the enigma surrounding its disappearance.

Despite its loss, the Black Book remains a powerful symbol of resilience and identity. Stories of its contents—tales of legendary chiefs, Gaelic poetry, and vital historical records—have been passed down, ensuring its legacy survives. The possibility of rediscovery lingers like a shadow, fueling hope that it will someday be found.



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Featured Clan Crest



CREST: A hand throwing a dart Proper

MOTTO: Vi et animo

TRANSLATION: By strength and courage

The name "McCulloch," of Celtic origin, reflects strength, resilience, and a fierce spirit, with roots in regions like Galloway, Wigtownshire, and Oban. Gaelic variations, such as "MacCu'uladh" ("son of the Hound of Ulster") and "Maccullaich" ("son of the boar"), symbolize power and tenacity. The clan's history includes figures like Lulach of Moray and Thomas Maculagh, a sheriff of Wigtown who pledged homage to Edward I in 1296. McCullochs faced conflicts, such as losing the sheriff role to the Agnews, and saw highs like earning a baronetcy in 1634, later marred by Sir Godfrey McCulloch's execution in 1697.



We are excited to introduce "A Clan A Day," a new podcast hosted by Colin MacDonald that delves into the history of a different Scottish clan each day. Through engaging stories of legendary battles, key figures, and enduring traditions, Colin brings Scotland's rich heritage to life. Whether you're of Scottish descent, a history enthusiast, or just love a good tale, this podcast offers something for everyone. Subscribe on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Substack, or YouTube Podcasts to join us in exploring the fascinating stories of Scotland's clans.

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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