



Blair of Blair

BLAIR BRUIDHINN

• Honorary Member Rt. Hon. Robin Blair — Former Lord Lyon King of Arms of Scotland •



Blair of Balthayock

“Blair Talk” for Clan Blair Society

www.clanblair.org

First Quarter–February 2011

COLORADO GREETINGS

From snowy Colorado to everyone: We had great Robert Burns experiences here. We are looking forward to marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. As Jim says to parade watchers: "Remember, everything is better in a kilt!" Happy New Year.

President- Helen L. Blair

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I hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday season. We were blessed with a houseful of relatives for two weeks. I'm wishing everyone a very prosperous 2011. Just about everyone I have talked to needs it to be a better year. I hope everyone is able to stay warm. In southern Arizona we usually have very few freeze warnings but we have outdone ourselves the last couple months, so I'm sure others are feeling it too. While many of the States are bundled up for winter January brings about all the Robert Burns dinners. Arizona starts their Game season in February. St. Patrick Day celebrations in March are not typical Scottish activities but a big contingency of Blairs came from Scotland after living in Ireland for some time. April 7th is Tartan Day. It's a time to remember Scotland's independence from England with the signing at Abroath. From April on, Games are held all over the country. I hope you will be able to celebrate your history by attending some of the events.

Annual General Meeting

Boise, Idaho

September 16 – 17, 2011

Fellow Clan Members, please prepare to join together for the 2011 Annual General Meeting scheduled for September 16 – 17 in Boise, Idaho. The meeting will combine with the Treasure Valley Highlands Games and Celtic Festival scheduled for Saturday Sept. 17 at the Fairgrounds in Garden City, Idaho.

Ann Fredline will organize the AGM this year. Please plan to join us for this most important event. More details to be forthcoming in the spring newsletter

I would like everyone to take an inventory of any available time they might have to help Clan Blair Society. We have very few people doing a whole lot. I hate to sound like a broken record but we desperately need volunteers to take over several positions,

even sharing a single position can be done if we can find the right people. Adoree Blair of CO has graciously temporarily taken on the Newsletter but we need to find a permanent replacement for the position along with someone(s) to take over Membership, High Commissioner, Webmaster assistant, Commissioners for states without and helpers for the Commissioners who need a little help. I'm not talking about full time jobs, I'm talking about just a few hours a week/month can make a big difference to those of us who are tired and have health issues to deal with on top of everything else. **Without new volunteers our group will die off.** A majority of Blairs have never heard of a Clan Blair. Once the chiefship died out it became Clan Blair Society. So much genealogical research gets bogged down. If you never knew there was once a Clan Blair, why would you ever look for it? By keeping Clan Blair Society visible it helps keep the history easily accessible for all.

Take care,

Helen

Arizona Commissioner

Helen L. Blair & Andrew Blair Cupp

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Nov 5-7th, 2010 was the 24th Annual Tucson Celtic Festival & Scottish Highland Games. It was held again at the Rillito Raceway. Andrew was able to get us loaded and did the driving. We attended the catered dinner and Andrew represented Clan Blair in the Torchlight Ceremony. He looked very handsome if I say so myself. Our tent was out in the south forty away from everything but we still managed to get a few die hards to

make the trek out to visit with us. It was great to see member & CBS Librarian - Jennifer Blair. She brought some of her albums of Scotland, she has gone several times. Her daughter Zia came by to harass her mom for a little while but it was so good to see her. She's all grown up. Visitors to our tent were; Jessica, Kerigan & Oden Hunsacker and Liz Shears with her grandkids. We did have several of our friends from other Clans stop by to visit with Bob and to partake in a wee nip of Blair Athol Single Malt and Balblair Single Malt. I had a few rows with the President of the festival. I think Bob was afraid I'd have a stroke since I got so mad but luckily other clans stood up with me and we got some of the troubles worked out, luckily we had the Scotch to celebrate our small victories.

February 26-27th 2011 is the 47th Annual Arizona Scottish Highland Games. They will be held again at Steele Indian School Park in Phoenix. These are one of the biggest Games for Az. Besides all the different Clans and genealogy groups there will be the traditional Highland dancing, Scottish Country dancing, Pipe and drum competitions, athletic competitions including the Woman's World Highland Athletic Championship on Sunday, British car display, reenactment groups, a large kid's area and more than 45 vendors. Music by Alex Beaton, Angus and DidgeriDrew of Brother, Tramor and Traveler will be at the different stages. www.arizonascots.com We will set up 2 tents and bring extra chairs since we usually always have a pretty good turn out to this event.

April 2nd, 2011 will be the 1st Annual Tartan Day Festival in Payson, Az. Since this is just

Colorado Clan Blair Report

February 2011

starting up I don't have much info on it yet but we are planning on being there since there usually isn't anything around to celebrate Tartan Day. Those who might be interested check with me closer to the event.

May 7th, 2011 is the 7th Annual Prescott Highland Games. They will be held again at Watson Lake Park. It's a beautiful location. This is a smaller venue but I'd rather call it cozy. www.prescotthighlandgames.com

2011 Clan Blair Society Annual General Meeting will be held in Boise, ID in conjunction with the Treasure Valley Highland Games and Celtic Festival. www.idahoscots.org. It will be held in September but they have not verified the exact date at this time. Ann Fredline our ID Commissioner will be handling the arrangements. Details will be sent out by email, snail mail, newsletter and on our website as arrangements are done.



**Courage is the thing; all goes if
courage goes"**

~ James Matthew Barrie quotes

The Colorado Clan Blair Society held the 2nd annual Burns Supper on January 29, 2011. Twenty six (26) members gathered at Colorado Clan headquarters on Jackass Hill in Littleton and enjoyed fellowship, the increasingly fabulous haggis meat ball hors d'oeuvres, BBQ beef, and Scottish deserts. Of course we enjoyed wee-dram(s) of single malt with Blair Athol as a topper.

Adults enjoyed the company with many stories about travels and adventures during the past year. Perhaps most enjoyable was the play that went on among the 9 children ages 1 to 13. All had a great time in honor of Robert Burns.

The entire group presented the haggis with a march around the house that was in tune with Highland Cathedral music provided by the Denver Pipe Band (by CD). Torin Blair again presented the Ode to the Haggis in masterful fashion and then we settled down for dinner.

The Colorado CBS will march in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade on March 12, 2011 through the streets of downtown Denver. We will highlight our Celtic dancers Arabella Blair (7) and Saoirse Blair Galligan (5). We typically present the largest Clan group in the parade.



Group at Burns Supper L-R:

Row 1 - Arabella Blair, Meaghan Judd, Jenna Judd, Celton Judd, Saoirse Blair Galligan, Quinnlin Blair

Row 2 - Leslie Blair Gallagher, Tiernan Blair Galligan, Dyani Blair Galligan, Quaintance Blair, Adoree Blair, Hanna Blair, Chelsea Blair

Row 3 – Katte Judd, Curtis Judd, Atia Blair, Torin Blair, Erin Galligher, Mimi Allen, Connor Blair, Jonny Blair

Not Pictured – Erynn Blair Shryack, Nick Shryack, Cordylia Blair Shryack, Mike Galligan and Jim Blair (taking the picture)



Torin Blair presenting the Ode to the Haggis

Wesley C. Blair

Wesley C. Blair May 31, 1927 - Feb. 7, 2010 Wes of Cupertino, suffered a fatal heart attack doing what he loved best, fly-fishing on New Zealand's Mataura River, which after 17 trips he considered his home waters. He also fished extensively in Yellowstone National Park, Idaho, Montana, Connecticut and Maine. He proudly tied his own flies for more than 50 years. Wes also coached his sons' Little League, AYSO, and adult soccer teams. He loved to share fine wines with his friends and family. Wes is survived by Shirley, his wife of 58 years; his brother Elwin; his sister Maylou Blair; his four children (and spouses): Randy (Lidia), Larry (Debbie), Valerie (Ron) and David (Losana); his grandchildren: Braden, Kyle, Alexandra, Jessica, Lindsey, Michelle, Sophia, and Bryan, all of whom he loved dearly. Born in Oskaloosa, Iowa, he graduated from Coeur d'Alene High School, Idaho, before serving in the US Army from 1945-1947. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Whitworth College, Spokane, Washington and earned his Masters and PhD in Experimental Psychology from the University of Nebraska. He worked as a Research Psychologist for the US Army Ordinance Corp, Aberdeen; as a Supervisor for General Dynamics/Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut; and as a Research Scientist and Manager for Lockheed in Sunnyvale, from 1965 to 1989. However, it wasn't his work that defined Wes, but rather his keen intellect, his love of life and his gregarious nature. He was admired by many friends and was a source of information and inspiration to all who knew him. We miss having him in our lives. Tight lines, remarkable gentleman. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. Donations in memory of Wesley may be sent to: Trout Unlimited, 1300 N. 17th St., Suite 500 Arlington, VA 22209-3801, or to Yellowstone Park Foundation (Fisheries Fund Initiative), 222 East Main Street, Suite 301, Bozeman, MT 59715 Attention: Molly Pickall

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Newsletter Mailing

2/15/11

Fellow Clan members – As Adoree and I have undertaken production of the newsletter for the Society we have discovered many great ideas for information sharing from all of you. Thank you for your ideas and articles.

We have also discovered that members should consider joining the 21st Century with regard to how the newsletter is distributed. Of approximately 350 newsletter recipients, only 110 receive it by email or from the website. The balance of 240 are requesting paper copies by paper “snail” mail. The cost of paper mailing is about \$4.00 per member and the copies are printed in black and white. You miss the full color splendor of the electronic version.

Please forward your email addresses to Helen and indicate your interest in receiving the newsletter via digital format.

Generations of Saddlers

by Nancy L. Blair

Walk into a saddler’s shop and your senses immediately wake up to a new world of leather artistry. Each piece of leather is different. You’re engulfed in the essence of leather. The rich smell of leather wafts throughout the shop. You touch a saddle and feel the devotion and love of the maker as you run your hands over a custom-made saddle—the owner’s brand carved on the flanks and his initials carved on the back of the cantle. You trace the wild rose design of a leather belt with your finger. You see and feel the curves and whorls of a flower. Even the glue the saddler uses is integral to the ambiance of a saddler’s shop.

Some parts of the West have changed significantly, but not hand-made saddle making. It is basically the same as it was 200 years ago, according to John L. Blair, who is keeping the art alive in Douglas, Wyoming. Although, you can purchase a western saddle for less money, he says, from a company that mass produces saddles, the design is the same. However, he continues, “a custom-built saddle is a work of art and designed to withstand the rigors of the work for which it is intended.”

John Blair works with each customer to design the saddle to the customer’s specifications, whether the saddle is to be used for show, steer roping, barrel racing or ranching. The work starts with the saddle tree, or frame, which must be able to withstand the hard use through which many riders put a saddle. John covers the tree with leather on all visible parts. The customer may want a padded seat, a high cantle, a Post horn, his or her initials carved somewhere on the saddle. The leather parts of the saddle range from simple to complex, hand-carved tooling. For decoration, customers can choose metal or silver Conchos, lacing, and small plates.

John Blair can trace his interest in saddle making back several generations to Henry Landis, an ancestor on his grandmother’s paternal side. Landis was a saddler in Armwell Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey in the mid-1700s. Henry’s customers came from as far away as New York, Delaware and New Jersey to buy his custom-built saddles and harnesses. He enjoyed the company of George Washington, who used his house as a temporary headquarters during the Revolutionary War. Presumably, Henry made saddles for the future president.

After training at a school in Oklahoma, John apprenticed with T.J. Holmes in Cheyenne, Wyoming. His parents had moved to Cheyenne a few years earlier, so when John set up shop in the family’s red barn in on the outskirts of Cheyenne, he benefitted from some on-the-job training from his saddle-maker father, Neal L. Blair. In his own shop, John made boots, roping saddles for cowboys, a side saddle for a woman rancher in Pinedale, Wyoming. He made show saddles, including one for Hollywood actor Slim Pickens, and pack saddles, wallets and belts with fancy carving for the cowboy or cowgirl at heart.

John continued to create stunning works of leather art after he moved J. L. Saddlery to Douglas, Wyoming, in 1990. Popular designs on the saddles, chaps, holsters, belts and wallets, are flower carvings and basket stamps. “People don’t realize how much work goes into making a custom-built saddle or carving a rose on a woman’s belt,” John says.

His father, Neal, returned to his home state of Wyoming after WWII and began his saddle-making career in Lusk, Wyoming, in 1946. As an apprentice, he worked on plastic saddles built by All Western Plastics of Lusk. Roy Rogers and Dale Evans each owned one of those plastic saddles, but they never caught on with the general public. After training, Neal relocated to Lander, Wyoming, where he continued to improve his leather-working skills as an apprentice. From the early 1950s until the mid-1960s, Neal owned the Pinedale Saddle Shop in Pinedale, Wyoming (see photo).

With only a pencil and paper, Neal sketched scenes and people he met from aboard a troop carrier that took him and his infantry division across the Atlantic and through the Mediterranean Sea to the Allied landings in Italy. After the war, Neal used his artistic skills to create works of art in leather. His daughter keeps the saddle that he made for her nearly 60 years ago when she was a youngster. He named the saddle “The Nancy Lavonne,” as it was his custom to name a saddle after the owner. Nancy keeps her saddle in the living room now in Reston, Virginia. Neal’s nephew placed a framed leather carving of a pony express rider on a table near the fireplace. Leather boxes, knitting baskets, magazine racks, waste paper cans and other mementos of Neal Blair’s life are scattered throughout the family’s home in Douglas or are with his children and grandchildren. Neal passed away in 2006 after a long illness.

The business of making custom saddles as works of art lives on through men like John Blair.





Clan Blair Store

Helen L. Blair

Az_blair@cox.net



Tom Blair and dog Buck take brother Bob for a sled ride in front of his father's (Neal) Saddle Shop in Pinedale, Wyoming, in the winter of 1960

As members are renewing I'm putting the new store order sheet in with the new membership cards. We still have some of the older wool tartan in Ancient Blair, Modern Blair and a Dress Blair made of the Ancient with white stripes. I'm selling it at the original \$45/yd for members. There isn't very much but you can't beat the price anywhere. The new tartan that came in is \$58/yd for members and we do have the sanctioned Dress Blair made up of the Modern Tartan with white stripes. All the new tartan is 13oz, med weight, 56inches wide. Of course we still have plenty of the cotton twill in the Ancient Blair for \$15/yd for members and is 58in wide. I only charge what it costs to ship. We still have plenty of cap badges, kilt pins, tie pins, necklaces, belt buckles, cuff links, stationary.....If you interested in anything, just let me know. Phone-480-807-4024 (no texting) , az_blair@cox.net., or drop me a note, 7516 E. Hermosa Vista Drive, Mesa, AZ 85207.



Re: Sir Robert Blair, circa 1700 / 1800
Balthayock
Stall Plate – dated 7 April 1815

With reference to the above, Sir Robert Blair, and just in case it is of any interest to any of your clan members, we have in our possession the original Order of the Bath Stall Plate awarded to Sir Robert Blair when he was knighted in 1815.

At that time, military personnel who received knighthoods were allocated a stall in the Knights Chapel at Westminster Abbey in London and a copper plate enamelled with their coat of arms etc., was fitted to the stall to mark their place.

The plate is approximately 9" x 7" and made of heavy copper. The wording and coat of arms etc., have been etched into the metal and the plate heavily gold plated. Finally the heraldry / coat of arms etc., is enameled in colour and is in good condition. On the reverse is the original makers mark: G Harris, No. 31 Shoe Lane, London.

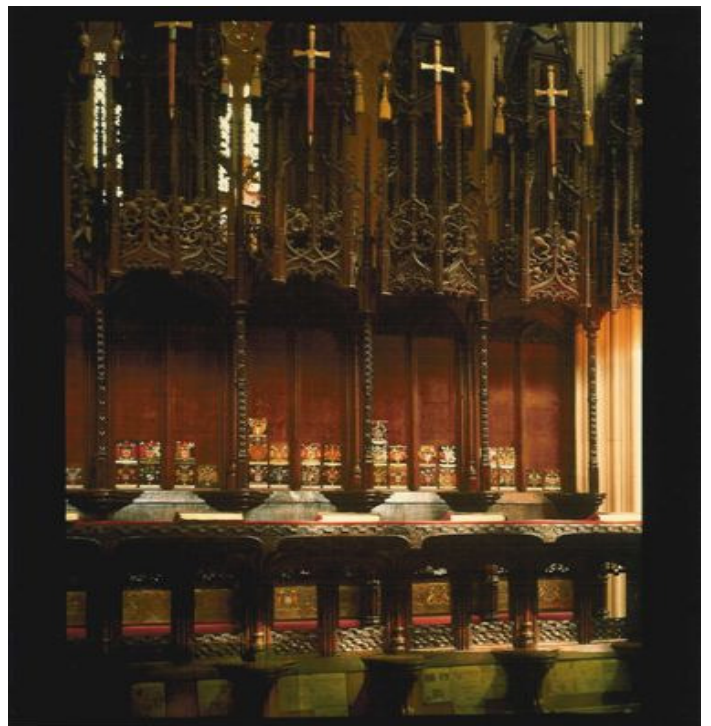
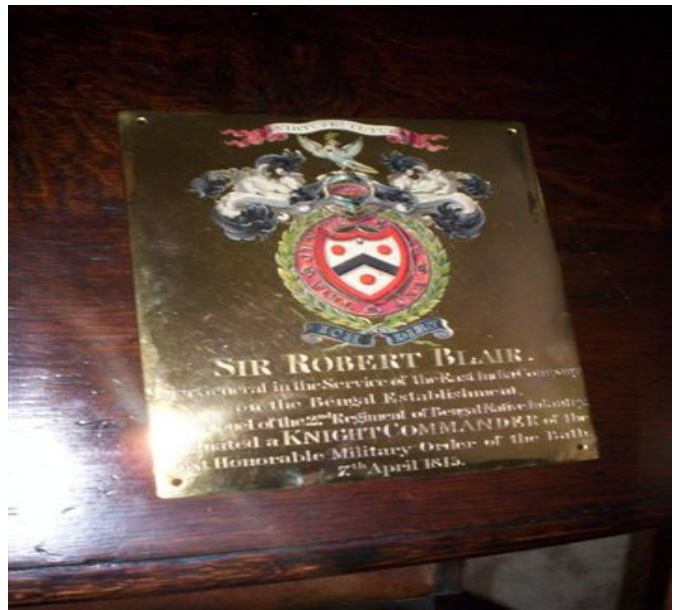
Please look at the photographs of the plate and chapel, and Sir Robert Blair's Military history.

We are preparing to sell this plate together with others at one of the London Sale rooms. If any members have any interest or require further information, please feel free to telephone or email me anytime.

Yours faithfully

David L Williams

Email: williams.dk@btinternet.com



Tel: 011 44 1788 860137 (Alternatively a message may be left by phoning: Tennessee: 865 428 6000 - and I will return your call if you leave your details.)

Membership – Helen L. Blair

Az_blair@cox.net

All annual membership dues were due January 1st. Please take the time to send in your \$20. Our group is only as strong as its membership. We are a non-profit group and our dues are used to print out New Members packets, yearly directories, supplies for making our newsletter, reimbursing a few of the Commissioners expenses to attend different Games, supplying educational material to loan to our Commissioners, to pay for copying and postage expenses, putting on a yearly Annual General Meeting where Blairs can meet & greet, internet domain fees, advertising, yearly donations to Scottish history/causes, etc. The ancient family of Blair is rich in history and we love to be able to get the information out by attending different Highland Games throughout the country. Many of our Commissioners set up great tents full of Blair history and genealogy information, allowing visitors to sit a spell and research their roots or just learn about the ancient family of Blair.

Please continue to support Clan Blair Society, otherwise the Blair history just fades away into obscurity.

Our dues are still just \$20 a year. If you prefer you can make payment right from our website with PayPal. Our website is www.clanblair.org. To get into the members area the id is- clanblair (all lower case) password-cbs1988. The passwords will be changed in a couple months then only be available to current members.

Or snail mail a check or money order to: Clan Blair Society, 7516 E. Hermosa Vista Drive, Mesa, AZ 85207-1110

Welcome new members!

#1055 Barbara Jeanne Blair

4150 Dover Lane

Provo, Utah 84604

801-224-8561

#1056 Rob Blair

650 S. Sunkist Street

Anahiem, CA 92506

310-486-0951

calidarts@yahoo.com

#1057 Fred Blair Macholz

7113 Wessynton Drive

Charlotte, NC 28226

704-542-2573

Macholz23@bellsouth.net

#1058 Robert C. & Elizabeth Gale Blair

42 Bugbee Avenue

Warwick, RI 02889

401-739-9647

gbmaam@verizon.net

#357 had been a member from 1991-1995 but has just rejoined

Sharon R. & Robert R. Hann

28 Brentwood Drive

Rochester, PA 14624

585-594-2971

hannsharon@rochester.rr.com

We have gotten return mail from member #959 Howard Hill Blair who was residing at 8434 Everette Way, Arvada, CO but has since dropped off the radar. If anyone has any information please let me know.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES:

#1001 Torin and Quainatance Blair, 7956 S. Madison Way, Centennial, CO 80122
720 340 1024

#998 Ric & Yun Blair, P.O. Box 121585, Nashville, TN 37212

#954 Eleanor Erion, eleanorerion@att.net

#120 Wesley Clyde Blair died 2/7/10 & his wife Shirley is in declining health so she will not be renewing the membership. Please include her in your thoughts and prayers

Our genealogist #412 Coy & Bessie Blair have completed their mission work in GA and have

returned home to NE. 1011 16th Street, Auburn NE 68305, home 402-274-9846, coy.blair@gmail.com

#275 Erin Blair, Box 129, 23 Mechanic Street W, Maxville, Ontario, K0C1T0, Canada

#817 Harry J. Whitford, 7600 NW 5th Pl, Bldg31 Apt#107, Margate, FL 33063-7474

Our beloved Commissioner from Western NY #826 Sampson Blair has completed his research in the Philippines and has returned home to Williamsville, NY. Just in time for the cold and snow.



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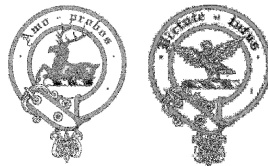
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