



# BLAIR BRUIDHINN



Blair of Blair

• 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](http://www.clanblair.org)

First Quarter – February 2017

## President’s Message



Fellow Scots:

Happy New Year and Hogmanay! I hope 2017 is off to a great start for you, your family and your Scottish network. I am delighted to share several significant events and initiatives by the CBS Board.

The **William Campbell Blair Youth Scholarship Award** has been approved by the CBS Board, honoring founding member of Clan Blair Society. Dr. Bill Blair was one of the originators of our organization and has served as president and long-time Northern California Commissioner. Upon his recent retirement, the Board decided to dedicate an annual scholarship in his name, the details of which are in a separate article in this letter. Congratulations Bill and thank you for your years of service to CBS and Blairs everywhere.

I am honored to announce that Whit Young, Utah Commissioner, and long-time member of CBS has accepted the role of Genealogy Director for the society. Whit succeeds Coy Blair and will provide assistance and support for members who are undertaking the journey to find their family history and connections to families, homeland and heritage. Whit has extensive background in genealogy research and access to church resources in Utah. Thank you, Whit for your dedication to CBS and

member’s desires to research their history. Whit can be reached at [CBSgenea@clanblair.org](mailto:CBSgenea@clanblair.org), [scots@lionshield.net](mailto:scots@lionshield.net), or 1-801-860-3322.

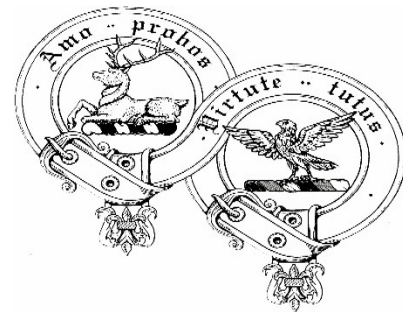
Also, please welcome Elena McCrary new co-Commissioner from Northern California as our new CBS Librarian. Elena brings a wonderful background as a professional librarian and has some great ideas about how we modernize the access provided to members for research and enjoyment of Clan Blair resources. Thank you, Elena for your inspiration and service to CBS. Elena can be reached at [CBSlibrary@clanblair.org](mailto:CBSlibrary@clanblair.org), [iwrusmccrary@gmail.com](mailto:iwrusmccrary@gmail.com) or 1-925-719-0324.

Please consider your personal involvement in your State Clan and/or the CBS leadership team. I encourage your idea sharing with High Commissioner Curtis Blair at [cbsclantent1@clanblair.org](mailto:cbsclantent1@clanblair.org) or me.

It is a Great Day to be a Scot - Sláinte!

Jim Blair  
[president@clanblair.org](mailto:president@clanblair.org)

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## William Campbell Blair

Youth Scholarship

1/28/17

Clan Blair Society (CBS) has introduced the William Campbell Blair Youth Scholarship to be awarded annually to a deserving youth member who has achieved excellence in pursuits related to their Scottish/Irish heritage. The annual scholarship is \$500 and will be awarded annually at the fall Annual General Meeting (AGM). Nominations for youth members 18 years and younger can be made by friends and/or family (members) utilizing the nomination form found on the [www.clanblair.org](http://www.clanblair.org) website.

The following outlines the expectations of award nominees:

1. Nominations may be generated by members/families/friends
2. Nominees are age 18 and younger
3. Recognition is focused toward Scottish/Celtic activities
4. Scholarship recognition may be for Outstanding Performance/Success in:
  - a. The Arts, including:
    - i. Artistic – painting, drawing, sculpting, characterization
    - ii. Music – piping, drumming, stringed instruments, piano, vocal
    - iii. Dance – Scottish/Irish
    - iv. Theater – performance – Scottish/Irish
  - b. Academics:
    - i. Excellence in the study of Scottish/Irish history
    - ii. Writing related to Scottish/Irish history, or stories
    - iii. Formal recognition of achievement by local educators or foundations
    - iv. Excellence in the study of Gaelic languages
  - c. Athletics - Scottish/Irish related:
    - i. Football (soccer)
    - ii. Rugby
    - iii. Wrestling (North Carolina, etc.)
    - iv. Scottish Games (where offered for youth)
  - d. Clan Blair Society support:
    - i. Active support of local CBS activities
    - ii. Tent/festival support
    - iii. Promotion of CBS – recruitment, fund raising, etc.
5. Nominations are invited in the February newsletter for submission in May (5/31)
6. A selection committee will evaluate and recommend award recipient candidates to the BOD for final selection
7. Recognition includes the \$500 cash award, a certificate of excellence and news coverage in the Blair Bruidhinn (and other Celtic publications associated with CBS)

Questions may be sent to Jim Blair at [president@clanblair.org](mailto:president@clanblair.org), or 1-303-795-9754

## Announcement – Membership Fee Change

As part of the 2016 Annual Board Meeting a proposal was approved to begin charging a \$5 annual fee to members who continue to request a paper version of the Blair Bruidhinn. The fee is to help offset the cost of printing and mailing and will be assessed for the 2017 year, and charged in the 2018 year. Please contact Charlie Diman with questions and your preference about receiving the newsletter in paper versus digital form (the digital form is in color).

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## Recorded Broadcasts Available on Members-only website

All webinar hosted presentations by the CBS Board are available for your viewing on the Members-only website (<http://members.clanblair.org>). Please let Shawn Blair know if you have questions or encounter and difficulty viewing these wonderful programs ([weblaird@clanblair.org](mailto:weblaird@clanblair.org)).

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## Northern California Commissioners Report Russell and Elena Mc Crary, No California Commissioners

We would like to start out by acknowledging all the hard work and dedication to Clan Blair that Dr. William Campbell Blair has shown through the years. As a founding member, his leadership will be missed but not forgotten. We look forward to having the benefit of his wisdom and his friendship. Late last year, we started our journey as we met Dr. Blair and received from him his collection of Clan Blair items to be used for the clan tent at the Highlander Games. Each item is precious to Elena and me, as well as the stories that accompany the pictures. These items have been displayed by Dr. Blair for many a year. A new chapter begins with a mix of the old and the new, and we look forward to the challenges and fun ahead of us. Highland Games that are confirmed on the calendar are shown below. The Sacramento Games are Dr. Blair's favorite so come and join us if you can.

Tartan Day Scottish Fair/ Fremont, CA  
April 1, 2017  
<http://www.eastbayscots.org/>

Sacramento Valley Scottish Games & Festival/  
Woodland, CA  
April 29-30, 2017  
<http://sacramentoscotgames.org/>

Highland Games & Gathering of the Clans/ Modesto,  
CA  
June 3, 2017  
<http://www.standrewsmodesto.org/Hgames.php>

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## Robert Burns Supper Colorado



Front row L-R: Brenna Simmons, Reed Simmons, Dyani Blair Galligan, Saoirse Blair Galligan, Cordylia Blair Shryack, Shawn Simmons, Tiernan Blair Galligan, Atia Blair, Leslie Blair Gallagher, Shala Tanner

Second row L-R: Randi Barthlome, Beth Simmons, Erynn Blair Shryack holding Lochlann Blair Shryack, Quinnlin Blair, Arabella Blair, Adoree Blair, Bonnie Blair Mustoe holding Emberleigh Mustoe, Jim Blair

Third row L-R: Russ Rainey, Ed Barthlome, Austin Simmons, Elisa Campbell, Torin Blair, Kim Blair, Janet McLaughlin, Jeremy Mustoe holding Adelaide Mistoe

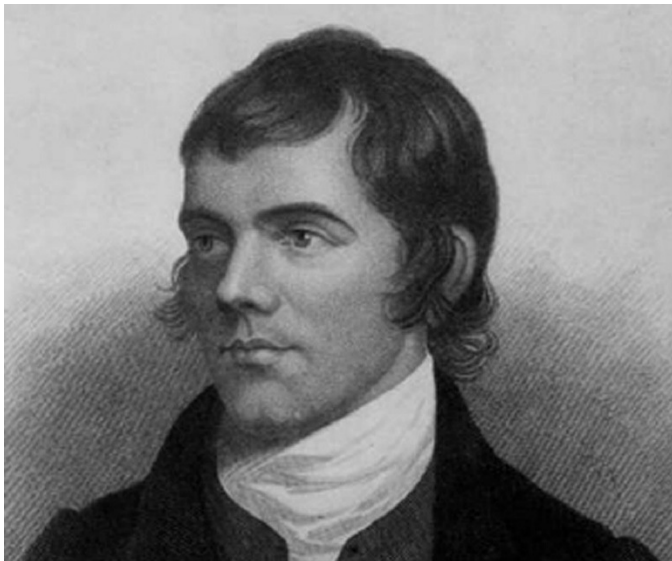
Fourth row L-R: Dawn Seacrest, Leigh Ramsey, Jim Ramsey, Ryan Blair, Carrie Martin, Nick Shryack, Scott McLaughlin, Laurel Cohen

Not pictured: Lauren Mustoe and Charlotte Mustoe.

Colorado Blairs and friends gathered at President Jim Blair’s home in Littleton on January 28, 2017, for a fun celebration of Robert Burns.

Torin Blair led the parade and presentation of the Haggis, with guests joining in the parade. Participants toasted with Blair Athol single malt and enjoyed an evening of camaraderie and great food, prepared and shared by all.

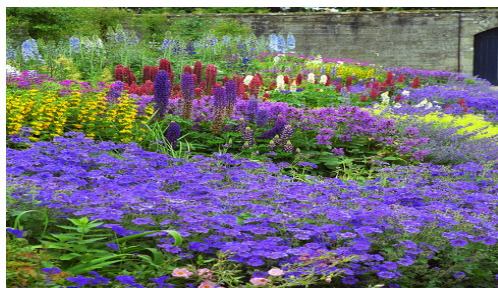
Jim Blair recited Robert Burns’ “A Toast to the Lassies” including “...A woman can make an average man great and a great man average.”



Scottish Poet, Robert Burns

As always, the Burns Supper was a highlight event of the year for participants.

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## Two Scottish Mysteries The Missing 9<sup>th</sup> Legion (From ListVerse, March, 2014)



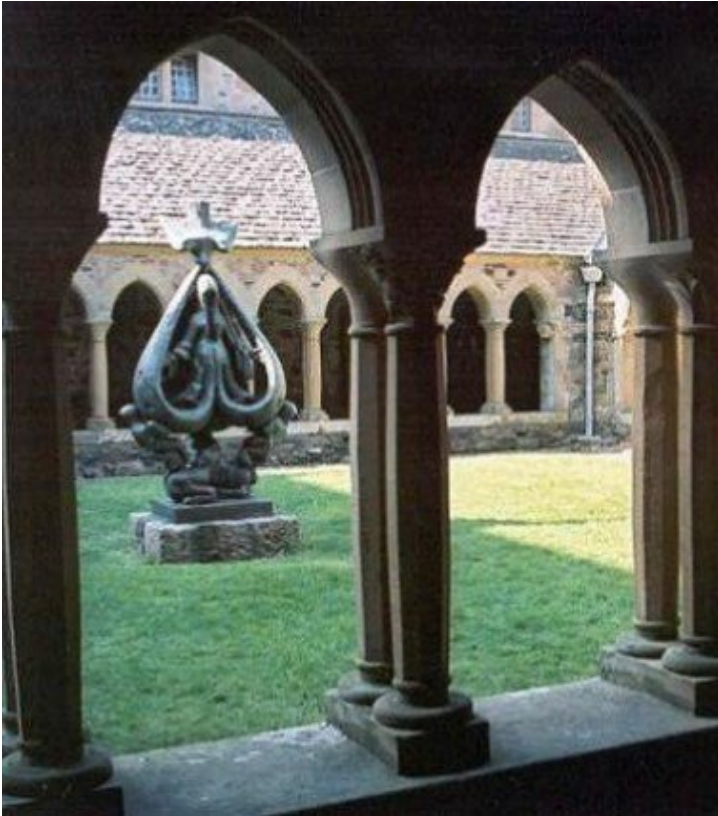
The Roman Army’s Ninth Legion successfully conquered England in A.D. 43 and—with the exception of the odd rebellion—kept control of the bottom half of Britain for the next 74 years. Then, from A.D. 117 onward, the entire legion suddenly vanished from the historical record. Today, no one has any idea what happened to them.

One of the most popular theories is that they marched north into Scotland to fight an uprising of the Picts. This story has gained traction in fiction as the basis of several books and films, but some historians believe the legion simply left to go fight elsewhere. It’s also been speculated they were defeated in a battle against Rome’s nemesis, the Parthians, in Iran. Another possibility is that they lost against a Jewish uprising in A.D. 132.

One clue suggests that things had started to go wrong for the Ninth even before that time. When Emperor Hadrian turned up in A.D. 122, he brought another legion with him, the Sixth. He proceeded to

build a wall across the north of England, then called Britannia, to keep out the people north of the border. If they had recently wiped out a renowned arm of his military, that would have been a very good reason to erect such a structure.

### The Missing Library Of Iona



In A.D. 563, missionary St. Columba and his followers landed on the Scottish island of Iona. It was there that he founded a monastery, which became a capital of knowledge during the Dark Ages. Kings were buried there, and people made pilgrimages to benefit from the wisdom of the monks. The monastery there was filled with the best writings of the age—most of which have vanished.

The only known survivor is The Book of Kells, which is preserved at Trinity College in Dublin. Many believe the rest were destroyed by Viking raiders who attacked in the ninth century, but some historians believe the books may have survived. They suggest that the books may have been taken to Ireland or buried nearby to keep them safe.

While archaeological digs on nearby islands in the 1950s proved fruitless, there's a chance that the

missing knowledge could still be nearby. After all, the Dead Sea Scrolls are centuries older, and a shepherd simply stumbled upon them in a cave. An immense written record may exist from a time period that gets its name from the lack of such a thing, but we simply don't know where it is.

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### Our Tour of Scotland Charlie and Betty Diman

We were extraordinarily lucky to contract with a Guide who was willing to provide a guided tour of Scotland, even if we were the only ones to sign up. His previous tours of 2016 consisted of sixteen and eight people, we had him all to ourselves! His original tour was to cover from Edinburgh to Loch Ness, and back, and was to cover a number of the Outlander TV Series locations. We had added a couple of days to cover the Blairgowrie Games, and some of the Perthshire Blair locations. We were not disappointed.

We visited all the must-see places around Edinburgh; Linlithgow Palace, birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots, Sterling Castle, the place Mary Queen of Scots was Crowned, Edinburgh Castle, the Royal Mile, and the Royal Military Tattoo. From there, we headed North to Arbroath Abbey, where the 1320 Declaration of Independence was signed and the burial place of William I “the Lion”. Next, to Glamis Castle, birth place of Queen Elizabeth II’s sister Margaret, and traveled the Cairngorms National Park to Inverness, visited the Culloden Moor battle field, Loch Ness (no monster sighted) and Urquhart Castle, then South to King William and Glencoe, then to the shores of Loch Lomond before returning to Perthshire.

While in Perthshire, we visited a number of Blair locations.

**Balthayock Castle:** This massive rectangular keep occupies a strong position above a steep ravine. It appears to date from an early period, possibly 15th century or before. The walls are at least 10ft thick, and are of whin rubble with sandstone dressings. The family of Blair is said to have been in possession of Balthayock since the reign of William I “the Lion” (1165-1214).



Balthayock Castle

Anna, married Alexander Carnegie who assumed the name of Blair when they acquired Kinfauns shortly after their marriage. Their granddaughter, Margaret, married the 11th Baron Gray in 1741. They had four sons and six daughters, one of whom, Jean, married the 9th Earl of Moray, and this link resulted in the Moray family acquiring Kinfauns approximately 150 years later.



Kinfauns House

**Glasciune Castle:** (only ruins remain) circa 1586, the castle and lands were purchased from the crown by George Blair of Pittendreich, whose son, James, was the first of Glasciune. The Blairs retained ownership until the 1715 rising, which saw them on the losing side. Some accounts maintain that Glasclune remained in Blair hands until the Forty-five when Prince Charles is reputed to have visited Glasciune, and persuaded Blair to join him. He was reluctant to do this, but his wife settled the matter, and he ended-up in France for his pains. True or not, Thomas Blair of Glasclune fought in Prince Charles' army as a Colonel, and did receive an annuity from the French Crown after the Forty-five.

**Ardblair Castle:** In 1399 the property was acquired by the [Blairs](#) of Balthavock, by a grant by King [David II](#). Through marriage, the property passed to the [Oliphants](#) of Gask in 1792, and the house remains the property of the Blair Oliphant family. Many [Jacobite](#) relics were brought to the property from Gask during the 20th century.



Glasciune Castle



Ardblair Castle

**Kinfauns Castle:** (nothing remains of the original castle) In 1647 it had passed to Thomas Blair of nearby Balthayock. In 1671, the Blair heiress,

**Oliphant of Gask:** Laurence Kington Blair Oliphant of Audblair and Gask's is Chieftain of Gask in the female line. Laurence lives at Ardblair

Castle, a Clan Blair seat, inherited by the Gask Oliphants by marriage to a Robertson of Struan. With his surname including that of Blair, Laurence is also, in the female line, a Chieftain of that Clan, as Blair of Ardblair, and thereby is Chieftain of the nearby Blairgowrie Games.



Laurence Kington Blair Oliphant

**Blairgowrie Games:** Blairgowrie and Rattray Highland Games are held annually on the first Sunday in September, just outside, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, Scotland.

**Outlander (TV Series):** Interspersed throughout, were the sites used in the Outlander, Starz, TV Series. Midhope House (Lallybroch), Blackness Castle (Fort William), Doune Castle (Castle Leoch) (also used a number of places in Monty Python and the Holy Grail), Culross in Fife (village of Cranesmuir, Gillis Duncan's home), Falkland (1940's Inverness), and the Highland Folk Museum, (used in several scenes, the McKenzie village, Rent collection, etc.).



1940's Inverness



Castle Leoch



Cranesmuir 1



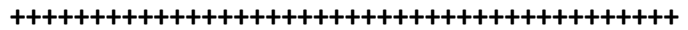
Cranesmuir 2



Rent Village

A trip to remember,

Betty and Charlie Diman



**SOME SCOTTISH HOLIDAYS**

(From Rampant Scotland.com)

January - March



Charles and Betty Diman at Lallybroch



The celebration of Hogmanay on 31 December, in Edinburgh

Hogmanay, the celebration of bringing in the New Year, is not the only traditional festival in Scotland. Many national and local celebrations took place in the past and some survive to this day. Here is a selection, with links to other sites, where available, for more detailed information. We start on 1 January and finish on the major celebration on the Scottish calendar - Hogmanay on 31 December.

## **First Footing - 1st January**

First Footing consists of visiting friends and relatives immediately after New Year's Eve, in the early hours of the morning of January 1st. First footing after the bells have rung in the New Year is still common. The "first foot" in the house after midnight should be male, dark, and handsome and should carry symbolic coal, shortbread, salt, black bun ( a spiced cake) and, of course, whisky.



First Footing

In Kirkwall, Orkney, there is a [New Year Ba' Game](#) held in the streets of the town which can last most of January 1st, between the Uppies and the Doonies, or more correctly, "Up-the-Gates" and "Doon-the-Gates" from Old Norse "gata" (path or road).

Near the Forth Rail Bridge at South Queensferry on the morning of 1 January, around a 1,000 brave souls plunge into the icy waters of the river Forth in

the [Loony Dook](#) . Many thousands of pounds have been raised for a variety of charities as a result of this event which has been running now since 1986.

## **Handsel Monday - first Monday of the New Year**

Traditionally this was the day on which handsel (presents) were given by employers to their staff, rather than on Christmas Day. Alternatively, in some areas, this was done on January 12th.



Handsel Monday

## **Burning of the Clavie - 11th January**

In Burghead, Morayshire, a tar barrel filled with tar-soaked wood shavings is carried around the harbor and then to the Doorie Hill where the Celtic Druids used to light their fires.



Burning the Clavie

## **Up-Helly- - Last Tuesday of January**

Held in Lerwick, Shetland Islands, a full sized Viking Galley, complete with shields and oars is pulled by a torch-bearing procession dressed as Viking warriors to the beach. Guizer Jarl calls for

three cheers for the builders of the longship and after a bugle call, the galley is set alight by 800 blazing torches.



UP HELLY 



### **Burns Night - 25 January**

The anniversary of the birth of the poet Robert Burns, in 1759 at which many a "Burns Supper" is consumed and the "Immortal Memory", a speech in praise of the Bard, will be given.

### **Candlemas Day - 2 February**

Candlemas began as a Roman festival to celebrate the return of spring. It is now a Scottish legal "quarter day" when rents and other payments fall due. There is an old traditional poem which said that

2 February - Candlemas Day Ireland Calling

**Candlemas Proverb**

If Candlemas be fair and bright,  
Winter has another flight.  
If Candlemas brings clouds and rain,  
Winter will not come again.

[www.irelandcalling.ie/candlemas](http://www.irelandcalling.ie/candlemas)

A green graphic with a white border. It contains the text of the Candlemas Proverb and a website URL. There are decorative elements like a four-leaf clover and a spiral on the right side.

### **St Valentine's Day - 14th February**

This used to be an excuse for youngsters to go round begging for sweets, money or fruit, while older brothers and sisters tried to find a sweetheart. "Name-papers" were sometimes used where names were written and placed in a bonnet and each person drew out a paper. If the same name was drawn three times, it meant a marriage would take place!

### **Whuppity Scorie - 1st March**

A rumbustious celebration by the young lads of Lanark. It is a relic of the days when making a lot of noise was believed to frighten away the evil spirits. Pennies supplied by money from the Common Good Fund were thrown and the children scrambled to pick it up. Balls of paper (or bonnets - a lot softer!) tied with string were used by the participants to strike one another.



### **Original New Year - 25th March**

The Celtic New Year was celebrated on Samhain (November 1st). Then, until 1600, the Gregorian Calendar which was used in Scotland, placed New Year on 25th March.

### **Fastern's E'en - Last Tuesday Before Lent**

This was a carnival and feast held on the last Tuesday before the sacrifices of Lent, during which meat, butter and fat were used up. Around Scotland the day had different names such as Bannock Night, Beef Brose and Shriften E'en. In some places, there was a rowdy game of football or handball. For example, in Jedburgh, a rowdy game of handball called the Callant's Ba' was held between the "uppies" and the "downies".



The Sports of Fastern's E'en in Kilmarnock, 1831

phases of the moon. In Scotland, to this day, "hot cross buns" are baked, containing spices and fruit and with a white pastry cross. On Good Friday, no ploughing was done and no seed was sown. The custom of rolling painted, hard-boiled eggs down a hill took place on Easter Monday.

**Preen-tail Day or Tailie Day - 2nd April**

The day following All Fool's Day when paper tails were attached to the backs of unsuspecting people as a joke.

**Hunt the Gowk - 1st April**

On this day people would play tricks and tell lies to catch each other out. But the jokes had to stop at mid-day. Now called April Fool's Day, hunting the gowk was originally sending someone on a foolish errand.

"Dinna laugh, an' dinna smile

But hunt the gowk another mile"



**Glen Saturday –**

The first or third Saturday in April when children of Kilmarnock went to Crawfordland Castle to pick daffodils



**Easter - Variable Dates**

There was a festival for "Eastre", a Saxon goddess of fertility, in pre-Christian times which was integrated into the Christian calendar. The date is moveable, because the calculation is based on



# Clan Blair Society Executive Board

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[www.clanblair.org/commissioners](http://www.clanblair.org/commissioners)  
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