



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 – March 2012

Presidents Message

Helen L. Blair
president@clanblair.org

Spring is almost here. I hope that many of you have been able to partake in the different Robert Burns Celebrations throughout the country. Many states will start their Highland Games soon. Please try to attend some during the year to celebrate your Scottish heritage.

Many states have a Commissioner who will be setting up Clan Blair Society tents at these events. Please contact them to see about helping or stopping by the tents to visit. Check out the Blair information they have on display. It can be a time to meet some great people and add to your “cousin” list.

March 17th is St. Patrick’s Day. Many people wonder why I fly an Irish flag at all the Highland games & festivals I attend. Well, both my family of Blairs and Bob’s family of Blairs came from Northern Ireland. Lots of Blairs settled in Ireland, unfortunately lots of records have been destroyed over the years. That’s where the Blair DNA project can help many get the information they need to trace themselves back farther. Info about the Blair DNA project can be found at www.blairdna.com

Clan Blair Society has a fund set up to help defray some of the cost to applicants that are active in our group and qualify. For info contact Jim Blair jeblair@msn.com

Don’t forget they we are blessed to have our own genealogist Coy Blair. He isn’t here to do all your research but he has many tools to help guide you in your quest. Query@clanblair.org

April 7th is National Tartan Day in the USA. The date commemorates the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320, which asserted Scotland’s sovereignty over English territorial claims and which was an influence on the American Declaration of Independence. Wear your Blair tartan with pride!

Start planning to come to our Annual General Meeting (AGM) August 4th & 5th 2012. Jim Blair, our VP and Colorado Commissioner has graciously agreed to host it this year. It will be held in conjunction with the Rocky Mountain Highland Games held at Highland Ranch, Colorado, just outside Denver. www.scottishgames.org Jim will let us know more about it as time nears.

PLEASE consider volunteering to run for the many offices we have open along with many board positions. We will be holding elections next year, so we need to get names to go the ballot. If interested please contact our Nominating committee chairperson Shawn Blair Weblaird@clanblair.org The more help we have the less falls on each ones shoulders.

Aye,
Helen

Clan Blair Society Bids on Blair House Artifacts

The Clan Blair Society Muniments Committee prepared for and bid on a package of historical manuscripts being auctioned as a result of the sale of the Clan Blair ancestral home, Blair House in Dalry Scotland. (*See Page 7*) After significant review and analysis the committee determined that a bid should be made for Lot 955. It was a collection, in a half

Site: www.clanblair.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/ClanBlairSociety
Twitter: www.twitter.com/#clanblairsoc
Forums: forums.clanblair.org
Gallery: gallery.clanblair.org

morocco album, that included about 130 folios with documents affixed, mostly letters to the laird of Blair covering business and family 16th - 19th century.

The committee did establish a maximum bid price for the Society's bid and then participated in the March 15 auction conducted by Lyon and Turnbull of Edinburgh. Bidding started well above the committee's maximum and therefore the Society was not successful.

Member Jack Blair from Bridge of Erin, Scotland, had personally reviewed the materials and did capture a number of digital pictures of the items. We will work with Jack and webmaster Shawn Blair to post the pictures on the www.clanblair.org website.

Thank you to members who contributed funds to the Muniments Committee for purposes of acquiring these historic materials. The committee commits to manage the donated funds with care and utilize them for the advancement of genealogical and historical information benefiting members.

Should you have questions, please contact Jim Blair, Clan VP, at jeblair@msn.com or Coy Blair, Clan Blair Genealogy Coordinator coy.blair@gmail.com.

Thanks to Committee members:

Coy Blair
Shawn Blair
Charlie Diman
Jack Blair
Ann Fredline
Bob Blair
Jim Blair - Chair



NORTH CAROLINA

Commissioner Charles Diman

cndiman@carolina.rr.com

North Carolina will have Blair tents at the following games:

Lake Norman: April 14-15, 2012

Grandfather Mountain: July 12-15, 2012

Scotland County: October 6, 2012

Helen L. Blair & Andrew Blair Cupp

Arizona Commissioners

Az_blair@cox.net

Due to Bob's health, Andrew will be setting up all our CBS tents and will be ready to host them on his own if need be. Bob and I will try to at least show up to as many as we can. We love to visit with our distant "cousins".

March 24 & 25th- The 48th Annual Arizona Scottish Gathering and Highland Games will be held again at Steele Indian School Park in Phoenix, AZ. These are the largest games held in Arizona. The date has been changed and they are changing how they set things up so the Clan tents won't be separated from the activities. We will have two tents set up. www.arizonascots.com

April 14 & 15- The 2nd Annual Rim Country Celtic Festival will be held in Payson, AZ. This year it will be at the Payson Elk Lodge RV parking area. There will be lots of music, entertainment and some vendors along with Clan tents. We will have a tent there for both days. www.Rimcountrycelts.org

May 11&12- The 8th Annual Prescott Highland Games will be held at Watson Lake just outside Prescott, AZ. Friday evening will be the 2nd Annual Ian MacNessie Gathering in Prescott Valley, a big Ceilidh. The Games will be Saturday at Watson Lake. These Games are growing so fast. It gets better each year. We will have a tent there on Sat. www.prescotthighlandgames.com

Colorado Report

3/1/12

Burns Supper was a Great Success:

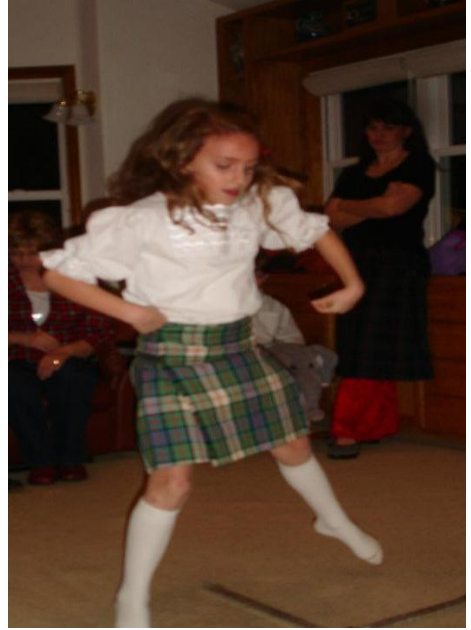


Clan Blair – Colorado held its annual Burns Supper on February 17 at the home of Jim and Adoree Blair. The event was delayed 2 weeks due to a heavy Colorado snow storm in January. Thirty one (31) Clan members joined together to recognize the Great Robert Burns' birthday.

The event included the parade of the Haggis with all present participating in a procession around the house, the Ode to the Haggis by Torin Blair, a toast to the lassies by Jim Blair who quoted Burn's favorites, and then great food and drink. Blair Athol was the single malt of choice. All members enjoyed fellowship, studying maps of Scotland, stories and history.

We were entertained by Highlands dancer Arabella Blair and Irish dancer Saoirse Blair Galligan who jumped and whirled across the living room.

Our next Clan event is the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 17. We expect 2 dozen Clan members to march in the parade, which is one of America's largest with more than ¼ million in attendance



Arabella Blair Performing the Sword Dance



Saoirse Galligan Performing Irish Dancing





Burns Supper, Colorado Attendees

Front Row L-R: Quaintance Blair, Arabella Blair, Saoirse Blair Galligan, Atia Blair, Dyani Blair Galligan, Tiernan Blair Galligan, Erynn Blair Shryack, Cordylia Blair Shryack, Torin Blair, Quinnlin Blair, Celton Judd, Megan Judd

Second Row L-R: Jim Blair, Wendy Blair, Hannah Blair (holding 9 month old Scout), Chelsea Blair, Candace Foyt, Adoree Blair, Leslie Blair Gallagher,

Back Row L-R: Jon Blair, Carson Blair, Nick Shryack, Jonny Blair, Sue Hawthorne, David Foyt, Curtis Judd, Ryan Blair

Not pictured: Katie Blair, Kaite Judd (taking picture), Mike Galligan



When an old Scottish lady was asked why she had suddenly taken to studying the Bible so assiduously, she replied "I'm studying for my finals".

An advertisement in an Edinburgh newspaper read "For sale. Genuine leopard-skin coat. Spotless condition."



Torin Blair quoting the Ode to the Haggis, with Arabella, Quaintance and Atia Blair



CLAN BLAIR NOTES

CBS member #24, SC Commissioner, Wyomia Blair is on the mend, she said her knee is healing well after replacement surgery. Her older sister Dot is getting very frail but thankful their nephew Dale Granger (CBS #1024) has been a great help to the both of them.

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#898 Chris & Ruth Blair of Oregon are proud to announce the birth of their first grandchild.

Lorelai Marie Pollack was born Nov 15th, 2011. 8lb 8.6oz, 20 inches long. Parents are Rachel & Brian Pollack. The grandparents report that the baby was born with some health problems requiring expedited surgery. They are hoping and praying that no further surgery will be needed. All prayers are appreciated.

Membership Changes

#211 Robin Brady Blair has moved
P.O Box 265
San Dimas, CA 91773-0265

#357 Sharon Hann has moved from PA to NY
59 Cottage Grove Circle
North Chili, NY 14514

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We Need YOU

Clan Blair Society, founded in 1988 by a small group of 'Blairs,', is operated by another 'small' group of volunteers. As is usual for this type of organization, the same people end up keeping it going over the years. Since its inception, CBS has had 5 different members lead as President. Those same members previously served as Vice President. We have had 4 members serve as Treasurer. In addition to these officers, we need a Secretary, Nominating Chair, Nominating Committee Members, Membership Chair, High Commissioner, Newsletter Editor and Publisher, Clan Store Chair, Genealogist, and Webmaster. Please consider how you can contribute to the society and contact our officers to volunteer.

Yours aye,

Shawn Blair, WebLaird
Clan Blair Society
weblaird@clanblair.org



Interesting History of John Blair

(written by Bob Blair, who is John Blair's Great Grand Nephew)

John Blair 15 November 1803-6 March 1836

John was the second oldest son of Thomas Blair and Polly Wall Blair. Although it has been often stated that John was from Tennessee, the Blair family was in the Cape Girardeau, Missouri area by 1806. John may have been born in Georgia before the family moved or possibly in Missouri. If he was born in what is now Missouri, he was one of the first Americans born in Louisiana Purchase land. The treaty had been signed in Paris in April but was ratified by the United States congress just a month before John's 1803 birth date. John's family was typically large and he had six brothers and two sisters. The family was Methodist and John's father was one of the charter members of the first congregation west of the Mississippi at McKendree Chapel near Jackson, Missouri. John's middle name is not known but several of his brothers are middle named after prominent Methodist bishops of the time. His physical appearance is not known but the Blairs were typically of fair complexion, freckled, tall, lanky and had red hair.

The Blair family had likely come to America sometime after the Highland clearances of the eighteenth century and via Antrim county, Ireland. John's father, Thomas, is thought to have been born in Georgia around the time of the Declaration of Independence. The family may have been descendants of Scottish cattle drovers as cattle have been a part of the lives of most of the subsequent generations of Blairs.

John was less than one year old when Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set off from St. Louis to explore the northwest. He would have been startled at age eight by the first violent tremors of the New Madrid earthquake centered just about fifty miles south and would have been astounded to find out that the quake opened large chasms on the land and had changed the course of the mighty river. He would have also witnessed the Great Comet of 1811 and a solar eclipse in September of the same year.

The young John may have been enthralled by stories of Zebulon Pike, Colter, Sparks, Freeman

and, of course, Lewis and Clark exploring new lands and having unimaginable adventures. Living on the Mississippi in the early 1800's meant that he would have been exposed to fur traders and adventurers like Manuel Lisa, Auguste and Pierre Choteau, Mike Fink and other men enthusiastically pursuing their fortunes on the river. He may even have been an excited witness to the first steamboat, The New Orleans, traversing the Mississippi. As a teenager, he saw Missouri become a state in 1820.

As young John Blair approached adulthood he would have surely heard tales of the opportunities in the new land of Texas. It was said that men could go there and be all but given great tracts of good land with abundant water and agreeable climate. He met and married a young lady who was possibly named Mary. And so it is against this backdrop of the excitement of new exploration, fortunes to be made, and being responsible for making your own way in a bright new world, that John and Mary set off for Texas.

John Blair was a dreamer like so many others who, before him and after him, settled new lands. Like most who undertake such an intoxicating new experience, they discounted the reports of brutal Comanche attacks, stifling hot summers, freezing blue northers, deadly rattlesnakes, clouds of biting insects and alternating seas of mud and impenetrable dust storms filtering out of the new land. They probably assumed they could continue their devotion to their Methodist faith while paying mere lip service to the requirement that they convert to Roman Catholicism as a condition of immigration. This requirement would not have been popular with the rest of the devout Methodist Blair family and was likely a significant point of contention prior to the couple's departure.

It is not known when they arrived in eastern Texas but John registered as a married man for one league of land (4,428 acres) in Zavala's Colony on February 19, 1835. John and Mary had dreams of hundreds of valuable beeves grazing on their league of land, raising a large family and living a long,

comfortable life as Texans. In less than a year that dream would be smashed forever by the war of the Texas revolution.

John dutifully joined the revolution and went to Bexar as a Private with Colonel James Bowie. He may have served as a fourth cannoneer with Parrott's artillery battery but later followed Bowie into the Alamo. In the election at the Alamo on February 1, 1836, John voted for Samuel Maverick and Jesse Badgett to be delegates to the convention for Texas independence. If there was a line in the sand, John stepped across it. Louis Rose later testified that he had left John Blair behind inside the fortress. John was one of the defenders of the Alamo who stood with Travis, Bowie and Crockett and made the ultimate sacrifice for the independence of their new country.

A few years later, Thomas Milligan Blair, John's older brother, came to Texas with the family's power of attorney to claim the land that the grateful republic had awarded John's siblings for his service and sacrifice. In May of 1854, the family of John Blair, received a land patent which had been secured by John M. Stephen. On January 12, 1855, John's family made a warrantee deed to Mister Stephen for the land, which became the town of Stephenville, Texas. Even though it does not bear his name, the city of Stephenville is a fitting tribute to John Blair and the other Texan heroes who died with him at the Alamo.

***Footnote:

This representation of the life of John Blair-Defender of the Alamo is based on both documented and non-documented sources and should not be used as any kind of factual documentation for any facet of his life or the lives of any other members of the Blair family. It is merely an attempt to paint a more human impression of this well-known Blair ancestor whose service was instrumental in the Texas revolution.



The Story Behind the Scottish Thistle,
the national emblem of Scotland, “A Prickly Tale” by
John A Duncan, of Sketraw, KCN, FSA Scot.
(Adapted from ‘Scottish History Online’)

The prickly purple thistle was adopted as the Emblem of Scotland during the reign of Alexander III (1249 -1286). Legend has it that an Army of King Haakon of Norway, intent on conquering the Scots, landed at the Coast of Larges at night to surprise the sleeping Scottish Clansmen. In order to move more stealthily under the cover of darkness, the Norsemen removed their footwear.

As they drew near to the Scots, they found that the army wasn't the only thing hiding under the cover of darkness. For one of Haakon's men unfortunately stood on one of these spiny little defenders and shrieked out in pain, alerting the Clansmen of the advancing Norsemen. Needless to say, the Scots won the day.

Order of the Thistle, The English Version (Adapted from ‘The British Monarchy Online’)

The Order of the Thistle represents the highest honour in Scotland. It is second only in precedence in the UK to the Order of the Garter. The Order honours Scottish men and women who have held public office or who have contributed in a particular way to national life.

The date of the foundation of the Order is not known, although legend has it that it was founded in 809 when King Achaius made an alliance with the Emperor Charlemagne.

It is possible that the Order may have been founded by James III (1488-1513), who was responsible for changes in Royal symbolism in Scotland, including the adoption of the thistle as the Royal plant badge.

The Order of the Thistle, the Scottish Version

(Adapted from ‘Scottish History Online’)

This order was founded in 1540 by King James V, who being honoured with the order of the Garter from his uncle King Henry VIII of England, the Golden Fleece from the Emperor, and the order of St Michael from France, resolved to be in the royal mode. He made the order of the Thistle for himself and twelve knights, in imitation of Christ and his twelve apostles. Then celebrating all the festivals of the orders, he set up their arms and badges over the gate of his palace at Linlithgow, joining St. Andrew with them..



The common badge (shown above) worn by the knights contains a cross surmounted by a star of four silver points, and over them a green circle bordered and lettered with gold, containing the motto "*Nemo me impune lacessit*", "*No-one harms me without punishment*" but more commonly translated in Scots as "*Wha daurs meddle wi me*". and in the centre is a thistle proper, the whole being embroidered on the left breast.





BLAIR

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3.2.12

Dear Friends of Blair,

Luke and I very much wanted to keep you in our minds over the difficult decision we have made in relation to parting with the much beloved Blair House. As a family we have decided to offer Blair for sale so that the revival we have undertaken may be continued and expanded into a new era.

As many will know Blair has been in the family for over 900 years and the accumulated history and connections stretch around the world. These connections and the interest in Blair, its history and the people who created it, are aspects that we treasure and value.

We have spent the last 11 years reviving and rejuvenating this much treasured home and I have been researching the history, the stories and the fascinating collection of artifacts, documents and furniture. Blair has welcomed many guests over the past 8 years for special occasions, weddings, family gatherings, and celebrations and the Visitor's book reflects the wonderful memories that our guests have taken home with them.

Blair, with its history, warmth and beauty currently reflects over 900 years of history and the collection is still intact. We are continually discovering items of interest including, recently, the soap bowl used by Hamilton Blair in **The Seven Years' War** which was a global military conflict between 1756 and 1763, involving most of the great powers of the time affecting North and Central America, Europe, the West African coast, India and the Phillipines. Hamilton Blair served in the Royal Scots Greys in this conflict. We have also discovered many interesting stories about the family and the house which we hope you will find interesting.

To encapsulate and commemorate this very special home, its place in Scottish history and the people who created it and lived in it, we have made a limited edition film. Moments of time need to be recorded for posterity and for future generations to have an appreciation of their antecedents and the matrix that created their world. History is too important to be lost.

If you would like a copy of the film which will be distributed to subscribers, please could you complete the attached application and payment form and we will send you the copy after 7th March.

With all best wishes,

Luke and Caroline Borwick

Order form for Blair DVD

PLEASE NOTE YOU CAN ORDER WITH A CREDIT CARD!

Name:.....

Address:

Street:.....

City:..... Postcode/Zipcode:.....

State/Country:..... Country:.....

Contact telephone number:.....

Email address:.....

Numbers of copies of film @£10.00/\$15.00 per copy.....

Sub Total Cost.....

Postage: 1-5 copies £2.00/ \$5.00; over 5 copies £4.00/\$10.00.....

Total cost:.....

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Please charge my DEBIT/MAESTRO VISA CREDIT MASTERCARD

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Expiry Date Security Number

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Valid from Issue Number (if applicable)

Signature of cardholder.....

Email a pdf copy to: alex.dove@Lyonandturnbull.com

OR Fax to Lyon and Turnbull, c/o Alex Dove 011-44-131-557-8668



CLAN BLAIR SOCIETY

Membership application

- Special interests
- Genealogy
 - Highland Music
 - Newsletter
 - Attend Highland Games
 - History/ Archaeology

Please Print Clearly

Check mark in () any information you don't want published in our directory or newsletter.

NAME _____
 SPOUSE _____ ()
 OCCUPATION _____ ()
 ADDRESS _____ ()
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 TEL# _____ () EMAIL _____ ()

FOREWORD: The Clan Blair Society (CBS) is an educational, cultural, charitable and non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. Our IRS tax number is 22-2860055. Donations received help defray games, genealogical, educational, charitable, banking and publication expenses. All Clan officers serve voluntarily without financial reward.

PURPOSE: In order to secure a well rounded organization, the purpose of CBS shall be to:

- 1) preserve, promote and pass along to others the customs, tradition and heritage of the Scottish people
- 2) educate the public concerning Scottish history, literature, religion, architecture, music, poetry, arts
- 3) promote education in this heritage in all practical ways including grants to promising students
- 4) mount a substantial genealogical effort on the Blair family
- 5) encourage travel, correspondence and interchange of ideas and services
- 6) publish a newsletter and directory
- 7) show the Blair tartan at Scottish Games, parades and gatherings and whenever appropriate
- 8) promote teaching, study and demonstration of Scottish song, music and instrumental music
- 9) promote athletic skills including those peculiar to the Scottish sports
- 10) participate in annual charitable giving

ELIGIBILITY: We solicit membership from Blairs and their descendants regardless of surname, spelling or location of residency. Non-Blairs who are interested in the Clan may join.

FEES: Annual dues- Individuals & Family (spouse, children under 18) -----\$20.00 U.S.**
 Individual (student) 18-22 years of age -----\$12.00 U.S.**
 Lifetime membership (may be paid in quarterly installments) -----\$250.00 U.S.
 Contribution to Clan expenses-----
 Contribution to Clan Endowment Fund-----
TOTAL REMITTED HEREWITH-----\$

Make checks payable to Clan Blair Society

**Those joining between Oct 1 and Dec 31 their first years dues cover up to 15 months. For the second year and beyond, dues begin Jan 2nd. In Canada, dues are \$25 Canadian

SIGNATURE: I wish to join Clan Blair Society and enjoy the benefits of membership and participation.

Signed _____ Date _____

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE ON LINE IN COLOR. MEMBERS WILL BE NOTIFIED OF AVAILABILITY BY EMAIL. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE EMAIL OR WOULD PERFER A MAILED COPY IN BLACK AND WHITE, PLEASE INDICATE ()

HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT CLAN BLAIR? Scottish-America ____, Highlander ____, Genealogical Helper ____,
 Scottish World ____, Scottish Banner ____, Letter in the Mail ____, website ____, Games/festival please state which state _____

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