



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

Third Quarter – May 2011

President’s message

Helen L. Blair

Az_blair@cox.net

It’s hard to believe how quickly this year is going by. I hope that the extreme weather patterns have not caused problems for our families and loved ones. I hope everyone got through tax day without too much pain and I hope that everyone has been able to enjoy the spring holidays with loved ones. In Arizona we attended our first Tartan Day Celebration. I hope members were able to show their tartan at the different Tartan Day Celebrations held throughout the world.

Its time to mark your Calendar- our Annual General Meeting will be September 17-18 in Boise, ID in conjunction with the Treasure Valley Highland Games. ID Commissioner Ann Fredline will be hosting the event. Please join me.

Webmaster Sawn Blair has been busy placing Clan Blair Society on Twitter. www.Twitter.com/clanblairsoc

Many members have agreed to get their newsletter by email. It will save our group the cost of the paper, printing, mileage to post office and postage. Plus by email it’s all in color. Adoree has been putting some great pictures in the newsletter that are best seen in color.

I may sound like a broken record but we really need some volunteers to take over several positions.

Bob and I are dealing with several health problems that need frequent attention and doctor visits. I am hopeful that some members will step up and take over the Presidency and Membership positions to lessen the stress on my shoulders.

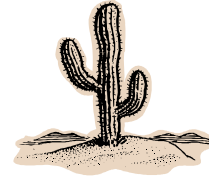
- 1) We really need to find one or more people to take over Membership. It is one of the most important jobs of the group. You have to be familiar with Access since that’s where the database is kept and reports are run from it. Membership prints out the New Members Packets, sends out the directory, membership card and updates, works with the state Commissioners, the Treasury, the

Editor and the Webmaster and is part of the Executive Board. Please contact me if you can spend one day a week during the first few months of the year during renewals, then its down to one day a month. Many of the expenses incurred are reimbursed but you must have a computer, color printer & computer skills. Az_blair@cox.net

- 2) We really need some people to help Adoree Blair of CO by taking over the newsletter. The newsletter is the glue that holds the group together. Adoree and her husband Jim are both working full time, they both have their own businesses and are extremely involved with children at risk projects. In other words, they are burning the candle at both ends. We have been very blessed that they agreed to take it over for a short time but it’s time for a permanent replacement to be found. Many of the expenses incurred are reimbursed. Please contact them if you can lend a hand. Adoree1@msn.com
- 3) The High Commissioner position has been open for more than a decade. This position is responsible for contacting the different State Commissioner quarterly to see how they’re doing and help give them ideas to make their job an easier one. This position needs a computer to send out the Commissioner files, do yearly updates to send out to Commissioners too and is a member of the Executive Board. Az_blair@cox.net
- 4) We need a Webmaster Assistant to help our Webmaster Shawn Blair with the data entry & updates Weblaird@clanblair.org
- 5) Many states are without Commissioners. Some of our Commissioners have ongoing health concerns making it difficult to host a tent without help. If you can help your state Commissioner, please give them a call. If there isn’t a Commissioner in your state, please contact a board member and we can help you get started.

We are fortunate to be getting several new members a year but unfortunately, we are losing more members than we are gaining. The median age of our membership is in the senior range. If anyone has any ideas on how we can encourage young members to join, please share your thoughts with us.

Take care and please a Clan Blair Society tents at a Highland festival near you----Helen L. Blair



Arizona Commissioner

Helen L. Blair

Az_blair@cox.net

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MEMBER NOTES:

Member #876 Bessie Blair of AR sent Helen a little book about her family that started in Dalry, Scotland with her grandpa, to the US and the different places she and her family lived. She has experienced much in her life, lots of moving, not much money but lots of family, lots of love and everyone helping each other. It was quite an enjoyable read.

Member #898-Ruth Blair of WA let us know that her mother had a stroke March 13, 2011 but with help from the entire family she is coming along. Ruth & Chris are also expecting their first grandchild this fall from their daughter Rachel.

Member #549 Joan B. Martin spent the winter with her son in OR before returning to NJ in April.

Member #769 Mary Louise Tolliver of AZ spent time in Scotland this last year and had quite an experience due to the volcano eruption causing airline disruptions. She being a true Scotswoman made the trip on practically nothing. She is now trying to recover from hand surgery she had in January. She, being a former nurse, ended up having all the complications that most are able to avoid. We hope she is finally on the mend.

Members #827 Lee & Kathy Knapp of AZ have an addition to their family. They came up to Phoenix to pick up an elderly rescued sheltie. They will lavish much love and care on this senior citizen to make its lasts few months/years a happy time.

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Feb 26th & 27th we had 2 tents at the Phoenix Highland Games. We lucked out this year, members Jim and Alta Blair were down from IA and they helped us set up both tents on Friday afternoon, which was great because Andrew didn't get out of work until late. We enjoyed a dinner at Macayos after we set up. On Saturday we had quite a full house of visitors. It was a beautiful day in the low 70's. Saturday night a storm blew through, everything got wet, mud was everywhere and the temperatures barely got up to 50. Some Clans lost their tents and had their supplies ruined but luckily we learned from last year's destruction. We enjoyed the company of more than 30 visitors. We won Best Clan Tent for 2011 but I think it was because we were handing out shots of Blair Athol Single Malt Scotch along with Balblair Single Malt Scotch. Lots of fun was had at Andy's expense, lots of smiles and laughter going on at our tent, again I think the Scotch had something to do with it.





Helen Blair receiving the Best Tent Award

April 2nd was the first Tartan Day Festival in AZ, it was held in Payson but there was very few people or clans there. Unbeknownst to the organizers, some of the major routes were closed so unless people left early they couldn't get there. It was nice to see Allan Blair again. He had a great time in England & Scotland last fall.



Helen and Bob Blair

Mark your calendars

May 7th 2011 is the 7th Annual Prescott Highland Games. It will be held at Watson Lake Park, just outside of Prescott. It's a beautiful location and growing in size. Saturday 9-5 with opening ceremony at 10am, massed bands at 1pm, entertainment by Tramor, Knockabouts, Tom Thomas & Michael Donaldson. Ceilidh from 5-7pm. More info can be found at www.prescotthighlandgames.com

July 16th & 17th, 2011 is the 13th Annual Arizona Highland Celtic Festival held at Foxglenn Park in Flagstaff. This is a big event with lots of activities and entertainment. More info can be found at www.nachs.info



Bob Blair and Andy Blair Cupp

I hope that we see some fellow Blairs at the above events-----

Helen & Bob Blair with Andrew Blair Cupp

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IMPORTANT NEWS FROM JAPAN – AN APRIL EMAIL TO HELEN BLAIR:

Helen

From: YASUDA BLAIR

To: Helen Blair

Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2011 5:39 AM

Subject: Re: Clan Blair

Hi Helen:

Thank you for your concern regarding our earthquake problems. We live about 300 miles from the quake center so we came out pretty well except for a few blackout problems and some shortages of goods.

Robert Blair VII, Blairs in Japan

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Colorado Clan Blair Report

May 2011

The Colorado Clan Blair Society (CCBS) proudly marched in the annual Denver St. Patrick's Day parade on March 14. The parade, hailed as one of the largest in the country, attracts about 200,000 viewers. The Colorado CBS was represented by 12 members and all marched (and some danced) the entire 2.5 mile route. Our dancers, Arabella Blair and Saoirse Blair Galligan danced through parade and one of our former foster kids Tim Sullivan-Strong danced while carrying the banner. Pictured are:



L-R front – Adoree Blair, Brenna MacGregor, Saoirse Blair Galligan and Tim Sullivan-Strong

L-R back - Dyani Blair Galligan, Tiernan Blair Galligan, Mike Galligan, Angela and Steve MacGregor. Not pictured are Torin Blair, Arabella Blair, Jim Blair and Scott Strong.

The CCBS also attended the annual Kirkn' of the Tartan at Denver's St. John's Episcopal Cathedral on May 8. This service and ceremony are unique and special to all of Scottish heritage. The cathedral was filled with music from Denver Pipe and Drum Corps – Highland Cathedral is never the same after heard inside the marble walls, ceilings and columns. Young Quinnlin Blair presented the Clan Blair tartan to the tartan bearers for blessing during the service. Following the services, our dancer Arabella Blair performed in the church courtyard under the blue and sunny skies of Colorado.



Jim Blair and Quinnlin Blair following presentation of the tartan for blessing



Many CCBS members then met at Colorado headquarters for a celebration of the Kirkn' and Mother's Day. We enjoyed good food and drink while watching the wee-Scot's play all over the property.

L-R front row – Mike Galligan, Dyani Blair Galligan, Tiernan Blair Galligan, Saoirse Blair Galligan, Quinnlin Blair, Arabella Blair –

L-R – middle row – Ed Hawthorne, Quaintance Blair, Cordylia Blair Shryack, Erynn Blair Shryack, Adoree Blair

L-R – Naren Tichy, Noah Tichy, Atia Blair, Nick Shryack, Jim Blair, Ann Wells (and a little one), Scott Pace



Membership Information Changes

#1002 Dyani & Mike Galligan of CO have a new email-
galligan@q.com

#1001 Torin & Quaintance Blair of CO have a new
email- torin@torinblair.com

#1003 Erynn & Nick Shryack of CO have new emails.
nickshryack@gmail.com, erynnshryack@gmail.com

#933 Nancy L Blair of VA has a new email-
nancyinreston3@aol.com and new phone #703-476-5599

#342 Loren H. Blair of NC has a new email-
ncblairs@yahoo.com

#876 Bessie Blair of AR has a new email-
Bessie.blair36@yahoo.com

#225 Walter & Gloria Blair of NY have a new email
wgblair@hygait.com

#915 Nancy Hoyer has moved to 145 Mill Street #412W,
Natick, MA 01760 Phone 508-655-1411

#721 Larry Blair of CA has new email-
aclblair@earthlink.net

#1044 Cassandra Crossfield of FL has a new email-
toccoa56@yahoo.com

#798 Barbara Burnett of MA has a new email-
lakevu@yahoo.com

#1029 Frank Hall has a new email-
fnphallnsm@gmail.com

#746 Marvin & Donna Blair have moved to 121 E. 16th
Street, West Liberty, IA 52776

#913 Barbara & William Kirker have moved to 4840
Forest Drive, Suite 216, Columbia, SC 29206

#517 Andrew Franklin Blair of SC has a new phone
#803-712-6455

#1025 Trudi Blair of CO hasn't been a member since
2009 and has moved to 205 Ponderosa Circle, Golden,
CO 80401

#835 Julia Rattray Carapanos of CA is now Julia Rattray
Wyrick and has a new email jrwyrick@gmail.com

#296 Thomas R. Kellogg of PA has renewed his
membership after it lapsed after his wife's death in 2007.
his new email is trkoffice@aol.com

Welcome New CBS Members

#1059

"Jack" John Scott Blair & Jennie Ann Pearson
2323 East Apache Blvd #1078
Tempe, AZ 85281
480-907-4868
scottblair@me.com

#1060

Michel Noel Blair & Lisa Michael Valiquet-Blair
1813 DeSoto Road
Baltimore, MD 21230-1209
410-644-1044
schistdigger@aol.com

#1061

Shiang-Yi Lin
4550 W. Flint Street
Chandler, AZ 85226
480-963-3242

#1062

Thomas E. & Sandra H. Blair
1203 Beaufort Street
Laramie, WY 82072
307-745-7248
Tomb1203@msn.com

#1063

Gary & Laura Stephens
5231 Green Rea Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
704-451-4279
gstephens@southeastcommercial.com

#1064

John Cole
22 Jamestown Drive
Jackson, TN 38305
731-736-0188
69runner@charter.net





Scots Family Tree – Jack Scott Blair, 2-11 Az Games

Clan Blair Society State Commissioners

Arizona- Helen L. Blair, 7516 E. Hermosa Vista Drive, Mesa, AZ 85207; 480-807-4024, az_blair@cox.net

Northern CA- William C. Blair, 401 Olive Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025; 650-324-4314, bbblair@comcast.net

Southern CA- Vicky Bartlett, 1625 Fletcher Ave, South Pasadena, CA 91030; 626-799-6338, vickybartlett@att.net

Southern CA- Frances Holt, 15928 Lonecrest Drive, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745; 626-330-1034, ellenquilter@verizon.net

Southern CA- Bryan & Jamie Blair, 1110 N. Griffith Park Dr, Burbank, CA 91506; 818-481-1959, sloppywillie1@yahoo.com

Colorado- James E. Blair, 7200 S. Prince Street, Littleton, CO 80120; 303-795-9754, jeblair@msn.com

and

Colorado- Leslie Blair Gallagher, 5532 Mansfield Ct., Colorado Springs, CO, 80916; lvblairgallher@hotmail.com; 720-201-3128

Florida- Braxton Millender, 2125 Messer Road, Carrabelle, FL 32322; 850-697-4547, bmillender@gtcom.net

Hawaii- Robert C. Blair, 1860 Ala Moana Blvd #1508, Honolulu, HI 96815; 808-688-3264, rcb911@hotmail.com

Idaho- Ann Fredline, 12001 W. Armga Drive, Boise, ID 83709; 208-344-0286, afredline1@msn.com

Kansas- Margaret “Peggy” Baker, P.O. Box 556, Baldwin City, KS 66006; 785-594-3121, glencoe@knetconnect.net

Kentucky- Marty & Bob Harrison, 381 Barren River Hills, Scottsville, KY 42164; 502-622-4838, blair95@bellsouth.net

Michigan- Phil Blair Hill, P.O. Box 186, Macatawa, MI 49434; 616-335-3334, greywolf53@sbcglobal.net

Missouri- Margaret “Peggy” Baker, P.O. Box 556, Baldwin City, KS 66006; 785-594-3121, glencoe@knetconnect.net

New England- Shawn Blair, 50 Market St. ste 6, South Portland, ME 04106; 207-799-7850, blair@clanblair.org

New York- Sampson L. Blair, 38 Cimarand Drive, Williamsville, NY 14221; 716-688-9640, slblair@buffalo.edu

New York (Long Island)-Lynne Dolan, 89-17 Lyman Street, Bellerose Manor, NY 11428; 718-740-4847, lynne412@verizon.net

North Carolina- Charlie Diman, 3413 Sunnybrook Dr., Charlotte, NC 28210; 704-643-7876, cndiman@carolina.rr.com

South Carolina- Wyomia Blair, 102 Hawthorne Lane, Greenville, SC 29605; 864-235-0834, cissiblair@bellsouth.net

Texas- Burton Dworsky, 3405 Blue Wing Drive, Dickinson, TX 77539; 281-337-3267, siouxsieboy@yahoo.com

Utah- Scott Schmidt, 428 Mapleton Circle, Tooele, UT 84074-8600; 435-695-4433, scotishblair@gmail.com

Utah- Whit Young, 460 S. Moss Hill Drive, Bountiful, UT, 84010; 801-298-0828, clanblair@lionsshield.net

Virginia- John N. Blair, 3340 Lankford Mill Road, Bedford, VA 24523; 540-587-9416, coachblair@aol.com

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Kay's Edinburgh Portraits
The Rev. Hugh Blair, D.D., of the High Church, Edinburgh

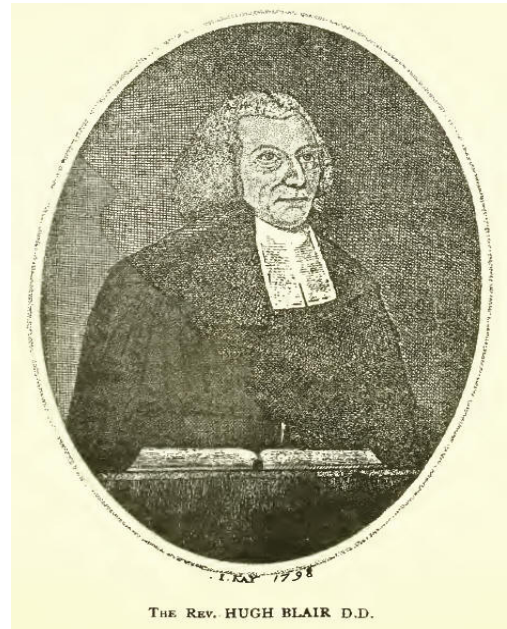
The author of the "Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres," and of five volumes of universally admired Sermons, whose life and writings have done so much credit to the Scottish pulpit, was born at Edinburgh in 1718. His father was a merchant, and grandson to Robert

Blair, an eminent Presbyterian "Scots Worthy" of the seventeenth century.

Young Blair commenced his academical studies in 1730; and having been prevented by constitutional delicacy of health from participating much in the pastimes peculiar to youth, his devotion to the acquisition of knowledge became the more close and effective. His first striking demonstration of talent was exhibited in an "Essay on the Beautiful," written while a student of logic, and when only in his sixteenth year, which, as a mark of distinction, was ordered by Professor Stevenson to be publicly read at the end of the session.

In 1741, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh; and his sermons being distinguished at the very outset for correctness of design, and that peculiar chastity of composition, which so much distinguished his after productions, his talents as a preacher soon became the topic of public remark. His first charge was the parish of Collessie in Fife, presented to him by the Earl of Leven in 1742; but the very next year he was recalled to the metropolis, by being elected one of the ministers of the Canongate Church. Here, in 1745, on the breaking out of the Rebellion, he preached a sermon warmly in favour of the Hanoverian line, which was afterwards printed, and it is said had the effect of strengthening the loyalty of the people.

Blair continued in the Canongate eleven years, during which period he had the satisfaction of attracting an immense congregation from all quarters of the city, and found himself daily acquiring popularity. In 1754 he was called to the pastorship of Lady Tester's Church by the Town Council of Edinburgh; and again by the same body, in 1758, he was translated to one of the charges in the High Church. About the same period, the degree of D.D. was conferred upon him by the University of St. Andrews. In 1759, Dr. Blair commenced the delivery of those lectures on "Rhetoric and the Belles Lettres," afterwards given to the public in a printed form, and which have since continued to hold precedence as a standard work on literary composition. The lectures were undertaken with the concurrence of the University; and so popular did they at once become, that in 1761 the Town Council procured from Government an endowment of .£70 a year towards instituting a rhetorical class in connection with the College, of which Dr. Blair was appointed Professor. Hitherto, except in the case of one or two sermons on particular occasions, which were printed, the Doctor had not appeared as an author before the world. The deep interest which he took, however, in the exertions of Macpherson to recover the traditional poetry of the Highlands, led him to publish, in 1763, "a Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian," which was held by the advocates for their authenticity, to be one of the finest specimens of "critical composition in the English language."



Dr. Blair was the first person who introduced the poems of Ossian to the notice of the world; first, by the "Fragments of Ancient Poetry" which he published; and next, by setting on foot an undertaking for collecting and publishing the entire poems. He used to boast of this, but he little dreamed that the lapse of a few years would produce so general a change in public opinion as to the authenticity of these remarkable productions.

Although his style of pulpit oratory had become an object of very general imitation among the young clergy, and although he had been repeatedly urged to favour the world with some of those productions, which had captivated so many hearers, it was not till 1777 that he was induced to think of publishing. In that year he transmitted the MS. of his first volume of sermons, through the medium of Mr. Creech, to an eminent publisher in London (Mr. Strachan), with a view to the disposing of the copyright. Strachan, presuming probably on a very general feeling of aversion then existing in the public mind towards clerical productions, sent a discouraging answer to Dr. Blair. In the meantime the MS. had been handed to Dr. Johnson for perusal, who, after Strachan's unfavourable letter had been dispatched to the north, sent a note to the publisher, in which he says, "I have read over Dr. Blair's first sermon with more than approbation; to say it is good, is to say too little." This judgment, strengthened by a conversation afterwards held with Dr. Johnson, soon convinced Mr. Strachan of the error he had committed. He therefore wrote a second time to Dr. Blair, inclosing Johnson's note, and agreeing, in conjunction with Mr. Cadell and Mr. Creech of Edinburgh, to purchase the volume for one hundred pounds. The MS. was first submitted to the perusal of Mr. Creech, who was so highly taken with it, that he made an offer off-hand to the author of one hundred guineas. Dr. Blair was so much struck with the amount, as to be almost incredulous of the verity of Mr. Creech's offer.

"Will you indeed!" was his exclamation. The popularity of these sermons exceeded all anticipation; so much so, that the publishers presented the author with two additional sums of money, by way of compliment. Not long after its first publication, the volume attracted the notice of George III and his consort—a portion of the sermons, it is said, having been first read to their Majesties in the royal closet by the eloquent Earl of Mansfield. So highly did their Majesties esteem the merits of the author, that a pension of £200 was settled upon him. The Doctor afterwards published other three volumes of sermons, all of which met an equally flattering reception, and were translated into almost all the European languages.

Upon occasion of the publication of Dr. Blair's Lectures, Logan the poet addressed a letter to Dr. Gilbert Stuart, at that time editor of the "English Review and Political Herald," from which the following beautiful extracts have been taken :—

"Dr. Blair's Lectures are to be published some time in spring. I need not tell you that I am very much interested in the fate and fame of all his works. Besides his literary merit, he hath borne his faculties so meekly in every situation, that he is entitled to favour as well as candour. He has never with pedantic authority opposed the career of other authors, but has, on the contrary, favoured every literary attempt. He has never studied to push himself immaturity into the notice of the world, but waited the call of the public for all his productions ; and now, when he retires from the republic of letters into the vale of ease, I cannot help wishing success to Fingal in the last of his fields. * * * * Your influence to give Dr. Blair his last passport to the public will be very agreeable to the literati here, and will be a particular favour done to me. It will still farther enhance the obligation if you will write me such a letter as I can show him, to quiet his fears."

Dr. Blair retired from the Professorship in 1788, in consequence of advanced age, and in a few years afterwards found himself also unable to discharge the duties of the pulpit. Such, however, was the vigour of his intellect, that in 1799, when past his eightieth year, he composed and preached one of the most effective sermons he ever delivered, in behalf of the Fund for the Benefit of the sons of the Clergy, the subject of which was—"The compassionate beneficence of the Deity."

In addition to his acquirements in theology and general literature, Dr. Blair was intimately acquainted with some of the sciences; while it may be worthy of remark, he also indulged to a considerable extent in light reading. "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments," and "Don Quixote," were among his especial favourites. He was also an admirer of Mrs. Anne Radcliffe's talents for romance, and honoured Mr. Pratt's "Emma Corbett" with particular praise. In Church politics, although the Doctor took no

active part, he was, like his intimate friend Principal Eobertson, a decided Moderate, and was zealous to adopt any means of improving the worship of the Church of Scotland, where such could be done without an infringement of principle. With this view, during one of his visits to London, he procured singers from the Cathedral of York, by whose aid he originated an amendment in the conducting of the psalmody, which was at first looked upon as a daring innovation, but is now become pretty general throughout the Establishment.

There were some slight defects in the character of the Doctor, which have been admitted by his warmest friends—he was vain, and very susceptible of flattery. A gentleman one day met him on the street, and, in the course of conversation, mentioned that his friend Mr. Donald Smith, banker, was anxious to secure a seat in the High Church, that he might become one of the Doctor's congregation. "Indeed," continued this person, "my friend is quite anxious on this subject. He has tried many preachers, but he finds your sermons, Doctor, so superior in the graces of oratory, and so full of pointed observation of the world, that he cannot think of settling under any other than you."—"I am very glad to hear that I am to have Mr. Smith for a hearer," said the preacher with unconscious self-gratulation—"he is a very sensible man."

Dr. Blair's "taste and accuracy in dress," continues our authority, "were absolutely ridiculous. There was a correctness in his wig, for instance, amounting to a hair-breadth exactness. He was so careful about his coat, that not content with merely looking at himself in the mirror to see how it fitted in general, he would cause the tailor to lay the looking-glass on the floor, and then standing on tiptoe over it, he would peep athwart his shoulder to see how the skirts hung. It is also yet remembered in Edinburgh, with what a self-satisfied and finical air this great divine used to walk between his house and the church every Sunday morning, on his way to perform service. His wig frizzed and powdered so nicely—his gown so scrupulously arranged on his shoulders—his bands so pure and clean—and everything about him in such exquisite taste and neatness."

Upon one occasion, while sitting for his portrait, he requested the painter to draw his face with a pleasing smile. The painter replied, "Well, then, you must put on a pleasing smile." The Doctor, in attempting to do this, made a most horrid grin, which, being immediately transferred to the canvas, gave his effigy the appearance of that of a downright idiot. This effect being pointed out to him by a friend, he immediately ordered the painting to be destroyed, and a new one forthwith commenced, the Doctor contenting himself with having it executed without the "pleasing smile."

Kay's Edinburgh Portraits

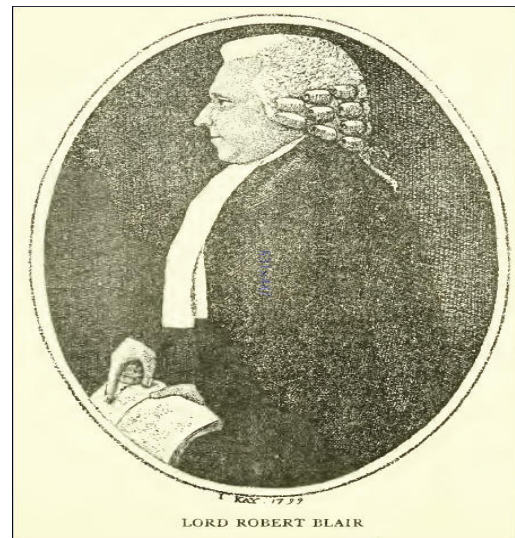
Lord Robert Blair,

President of the Court of Session

During the latter part of his life almost all strangers of distinction who visited Edinburgh brought letters of introduction to Dr. Blair: and as he was quite at ease in point of worldly circumstances, and had then in a great measure ceased to study intensely, he in general entertained them frequently and well. On one of these occasions, when he had collected a considerable party at dinner to meet an English clergyman, a Scotsman present asked the stranger what was thought of the Doctor's sermons by his professional brethren in the south. To his horror, and to the mortification of Mrs. Blair, who sat near, and who looked upon her husband as a sort of divinity, the Englishman answered, "Why, they are not partial to them at all."—"How, sir," faltered out the querist—"how should that be?"—"Why," replied the southron, "because they are so much read, and so generally-known, that our clergymen can't borrow from them." The whole company, hitherto in a state of considerable embarrassment, were quite delighted at this ingenious and well-turned compliment.

Dr. Blair died in the 83rd year of his age, on the 27th December, 1800. He was buried in the Greyfriars' Churchyard—the Westminster Abbey of Scotland—where a tablet to his memory, containing a highly elegant and classical Latin inscription, is affixed to the southern wall of the church. He married, in 1748, his cousin, Katherine Bannatyne, daughter of the Reverend James Bannatyne, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, by whom he had a son and daughter. The former died in infancy, and the latter when about twenty-one years of age. Mrs. Blair also died a few years previous to the demise of her husband. Dr. Blair's usual place of residence in summer was at Bestalrig—in winter in Argyle Square.

Amongst the many eminent persons who have attained celebrity as senators of the College of Justice, the Lord President Blair occupies a distinguished place. His father was the Rev. Robert Blair, minister of Athelstaneford, in East-Lothian, author of "The Grave," and male representative of the ancient family of Blair, in Ayrshire.



He married Isabella Law, daughter of William Law, Esq. of Elvingston, East-Lothian. The third son—the subject of our sketch—was born in 1741. His elder brothers were destined to mercantile pursuits, but Robert was educated for the legal profession. He commenced his studies at the High School of Edinburgh, and from thence was transferred to the University, where he formed friendships, which subsequently materially aided him in his progress through life. In particular he commenced an intimacy with Henry Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, which only terminated with their lives. Mr. Blair was a year younger than his friend Lord Melville. The latter was admitted a member of the Faculty of Advocates in 1763, and the former the following year.

This adoption of a profession, in which so many fail of success, was considered at least a bold, if not an inconsiderate choice, by a young man without fortune; but the extended practice, which his talents almost instantaneously commanded, dispelled the apprehensions of his friends. Blair rapidly rose to eminence as a lawyer; and in most cases of importance was retained as a leading counsel. The celebrated Henry Erskine and he were generally pitted against each other, as the two most eloquent as well as able members of the



bar. However much Erskine might surpass his opponent in witty observation, or ingenious remark, Blair was infinitely his superior as a clear reasoner and sound lawyer.

Mr. Blair was for several years one of the Assessors of the city of Edinburgh, and an Advocate-depute. In 1789, he was appointed Solicitor-General for Scotland; and, in 1801, was unanimously elected Dean of the Faculty of Advocates. His election of Dean was without a single dissentient voice, save that of Mr. Wilde, who cried out — "Harry Erskine forever!" When the intelligence was communicated to Mr. Blair, his own words were— "Nothing gives me more pleasure than the fact, that those opposed to me in politics were the first to vote in my favour."

On the change of Ministry which took place in 1806, Mr Blair was removed from the solicitorship; on which event he received a polite apology from the new minister, stating the necessity he was under of promoting his own party. This communication—no doubt dictated by good feeling—was perfectly unnecessary, in so far as the feelings of the ex-solicitor were concerned. Then, as now, a change in the Crown officers invariably succeeded a change in the Cabinet. The friends of either party were therefore prepared to rise or fall as the scale preponderated. Far from being out of temper with this turn of the political wheel, Mr. Blair showed his magnanimity, by proffering to his successor—John Clerk, afterwards Lord Eldin—the use of his gown, until the latter should get one prepared for himself. On the return of his friends to power next year, Mr. Blair was offered the restoration of his former honour; but he declined not only this, but also the higher office of Lord Advocate. In 1808, on the resignation of Sir Ilay Campbell, he was raised to the Presidency of the College of Justice—a choice which gave satisfaction to all parties.

During the short period that his lordship discharged the duties of this high trust, his conduct as a judge realized the expectations formed from a knowledge of his abilities at the bar. In his character were not only blended those native qualities of mind, which, aided by the acquirements of study, combine to constitute superior talent, but he brought with him to the bench that "innate love of justice and abhorrence of iniquity, without which, as he himself emphatically declared, when he took the chair of the Court, all other qualities avail nothing, or rather are worse than nothing."

In Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk the character of the Lord President is thus sketched:—"It would appear as if the whole of his clear and commanding intellect had been framed and tempered in such a way as to qualify him peculiarly and expressly for being, what the Stagyrite has finely called, 'a living equity'—one of the happiest, and perhaps one of the rarest, of all the combinations of mental powers. By all men of all parties the merits of this great man also were alike acknowledged; and his memory is at this moment alike held in reverence by them all. Even the keenest of his now surviving political

opponents [the late Lord Eldin] —himself one of the greatest lawyers that Scotland ever has produced—is said to have contemplated the superior intellect of Blair with a feeling of respectfulness not much akin to the common cast of his disposition. After hearing the President overturn, without an effort, in the course of a few clear and short sentences, a whole mass of ingenious sophistry, which it had cost himself much labour to erect, and which appeared to be regarded as insurmountable by all the rest of his audience, this great barrister is said to have sat for a few seconds ruminating with much bitterness on the discomfiture of his cause, and then to have muttered between his teeth—"My man! God Almighty spared nae lyains when He made your trains!" Those that have seen Mr. Clerk, and know his peculiarities, appreciate the value of this compliment, and do not think the less of it because of its coarseness."

The Lord President did not long enjoy that dignity which he gave such promise of rendering equally honourable to himself and beneficial to his country. He died suddenly on the 20th May, 1811, aged sixty-eight; and it is not a little remarkable that the very same week terminated the life of his early and steady friend Lord Melville, who, as has been elsewhere mentioned, had come to Edinburgh to the President's funeral. The death of these two very eminent men, as it were by one blow, was looked upon as a national calamity. Their early friendship—their dying almost at the same period—and the high and important stations which they had occupied as public men, naturally created a more than ordinary interest on the occasion of their demise. Their houses being next to one another, with only a single wall between the bedrooms where the dead bodies of each were lying at the same time, made a deep impression on their friends. In a Monody, by an anonymous author, who has drawn the characters of Lord Melville and President Blair with tolerable ability, their friendship and death are thus alluded to:—

"Two mighty oaks that, side by side,
For ages towered, the forest's pride,
And nourished in their shade,
Sapling and tree, and waving wood;
On whose broad breast October's flood,
And winter's war, and whirlwind rude,
Their baffled might essayed.

"Their musty boughs, compact on high,
Seasons with all their storms defy—
While some scant brook that oozes by.
Unheeded and unknown,
Slow on each hidden fibre preys—
Loosens amain the earth-fast base;
And far the forest wonder lays,
A thundering ruin prone!

"Thus, thus, lamented chiefs! ye fell
From glory's loftiest pinnacle,
By destiny severe:
Ere, tranced in sorrow, we had paid
Due rites to Blair's illustrious shade.

With heart-struck woe we hung dismay'd
O'er Melville's honoured bier."

The volume from which the above lines are taken, published in 4to at 4s., is entitled "Monody on the Death of the Right Hon. Henry Lord Viscount Melville, and of the Right Hon. Robert Blair of Avontoun, Lord President of the College of Justice." Edinburgh, 1811.

As a memorial of respect to his high talents, and to mark the estimation in which he was held, a statue of the Lord President Blair, by Chantry, is placed in the First Division of the Inner House of the Court of Session.

Mr. Blair married Isabella Cornelia Halkett, youngest daughter of Colonel Charles Craigmie Halkett of Lawhill, Fifeshire, who still survives. He left one son and three daughters—one of whom is the wife of Alexander Maconochie, Lord Meadowbank, one of the Senators of the College of Justice, and a Lord of Justiciary.

About twenty years previous to his lordship's death, he purchased the small estate of Avontoun, near Linlithgow, beautifully situated, and which continued always to be his favourite residence. He took great pleasure in agricultural improvements, and brought it to the highest state of cultivation. The town residence of the family was, in 1773, that house upon the north side of the passage between Brown's and Argyle Square. The house was purchased by Mr. Blair from the Dutch ladies, the Miss Crawfurds.

FROM VIRGINIA:

John and Judy Blair will be hosting a Clan Blair tent at the 17th annual Meadow Highland Games & Celtic Festival. The games will be held Sat. & Sun., October 29-30 at the new Virginia State Fair Grounds. The Meadow Event Park is on Route 30 (exit98 off I-95) in Doswell, just past Kings Dominion. These games are the site for the national finals of the Scottish athletic competition and the "punkin chunkin" contest. Join us for great fun and fellowship, AYE!

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Wesley C. Blair

Wesley C. Blair May 31, 1927 - Feb. 7, 2010 Wesley C. Blair, 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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Western Kentucky University Burns Dinner

Bob (Robert E. MacKenzie Harrison) and I were among the guests at Western Kentucky University's first ever Robert Burns' Dinner. An elegant meal was served at the home of President and Mrs. Gary Ransdell. Mrs. Ransdell did a semester abroad in Scotland. The new provost at Western is Scottish. Bob gave the Immortal Memory. It was a beautiful event with only fifteen in attendance. From expert advice on tasting Scotch to a group participation recitation of Tam 'O Shanter, it was a wonderful way to spend a snowy evening.

~~Kentucky Commisioner Martha Blair Harrison~~

Also from Martha Blair Harrison:

The Friends of Blair Mountain (West Virginia) are currently trying to preserve the site of the Battle of Blair Mountain (August 1921) from mountain top removal strip mining. NPR will have a feature on it this weekend. I did not know anything about it, so went on the web to locate information. (March 4, 2011)

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From Helen Blair:

On Electric Scotland they have copied a book on ancient Perth. In chapter 16, there is information about some Blairs. Thought some of you might be interested.

<http://www.electricscotland.org/showthread.php/1452-Newsletter-4th-March-2011> its listed under "Traditions of Perth" (1836)

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**FROM WILLIAM CAMPBELL BLAIR,
CALIFORNIA NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
COMMISSIONER:**

We had a fun and enjoyable time hosting the Clan Blair Tent at the first Northern California Games this year, the Sacramento Valley Scottish Games, held in Woodland at the Yolo County Fairgrounds the weekend of May 7 & 8th. Our tent was located next to the Clan Campbell tent, and since I also am a member of their Society, it was particularly enjoyable for me. The weather was perfect, and I visited with a number of old friends. Unfortunately, no new members , however.

I plan to host our tent at the large Pleasanton Games, Labor Day weekend, Sept. 3 and 4, and hope to see as many of you as possible there.

Now, at age 86, I am looking for volunteers to take over hosting our CBS tent in Northern California Games next year. If interested, please let me know.

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April 2011- Letter to the Blair Bruidhinn:

Dear Cronies,

We would like to draw your attention to our new business venture 'Burns Tours of Ayrshire', which may be of interest to your members, family and friends on vacation in Scotland at any time.

We are both members of The Mauchline Burns Club in Ayrshire.

Our tours offer visits to the many places connected with Robert Burns, where he grew up, lived and farmed. Mauchline village itself has many places of close association with Burns and his works including the house he shared with Jean Armour, Ballochmyle House where lived the 'Bonnie Lass o' Ballochmyle' and Mossgiel Farm where he lived at the time he wrote 'To A Mouse'.

We would appreciate it if you could take the time to visit our website www.burnstoursofayrshire.com and distribute this information to your members and other associations in your area you feel would be interested.

We would also very much appreciate if you could create a link to our website on your association's website.

Please respond by letting us know that you have received this message and any queries you may have please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

Regards

Your fellow Cronies,
Maurice and Malcolm



~ Said the Englishman to the boastful Scot: 'Take away your mountains, glens and lochs, and what have you got?' 'England,' replied the Scot.

~ Then there were two Scots who bet a pound on who could stay under water the longest. They both drowned.

~ Jock was in London wearing his tartan when a curious lady asked if there was anything worn under the kilt.

'No madam,' he replied with a flourish. 'Everything is in perfect working order.'

~ Then there was the Inverness man who bought his mother-in-law a chair but had to send it back. He had nowhere to plug it in.

~ Did you hear about the last wish of the henpecked husband of a houseproud Edinburgh wife? He asked to have his ashes scattered on the carpet.



If the Scots had a Breathalyzer...?

~A police officer pulls over a Scottish man who's been weaving in and out of the lanes. He goes up to the man's window and says, "Sir, I need you to blow into this breathalyzer tube."

The man says, "Sorry, officer, I can't do that. I am an asthmatic. If I do that, I'll have a really bad asthma attack."

"Okay, fine. I need you to come down to the station to give a blood sample."

"I can't do that either. I am a hemophiliac. If I do that, I'll bleed to death."

"Well, then, we need a urine sample."

"I'm sorry, officer, I can't do that either. I am also a diabetic. If I do that, I'll get really low blood sugar."

"All right, then I need you to come out here and walk this white line."

"I can't do that, officer."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm drunk."

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Please contact our nominating committee if you are interested in any of the open positions.

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