



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

Second Quarter May 2018

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE MAY 2018



Fellow Scots,

Summer is here, the snow is gone and Scottish events celebrating our heritage are all around us. Our Clan Commissioners are preparing to host Clan tents all over the country and you will see High Commissioner Bill Blair's report of CBS participation in the international festival in Victoria, Canada. We have received a few reports from other Commissioners that are included in this newsletter. Thanks to each for their reports – I suspect we will have many more in August.

Adoree and I fulfilled a bucket list experience by visiting Dunedin, New Zealand in April to discover Scottish roots "down under". She has included an article about our experience, but most significant is that our ancestors are global, and we are part of a world far larger than ourselves. Let's rejoice and celebrate our Scottish heritage.

CBS is transitioning the Clan Store from the management of Helen Blair who is retiring from that role. Helen has served the Society for dozens of years as Arizona Commissioner, President, Membership Chair, Treasurer and Store Manager.

Please join me in appreciating Helen's contributions to Clan Blair Society. Thank you Helen!

The store transition begins the process to place store business on the CBS website. While the inventory will be managed by myself here in Denver (until a replacement for Helen is identified), Shawn Blair and Nick Shryack are continuing their efforts to upgrade and redevelop the Clan Blair Society website. New membership and store pages are expected soon and you will receive notices via the web-mail application. When you need merchandise from the store, please contact me.

As reported in the February Blair Bruidhinn, CBS has adopted a new Clan Logo. Please see Bill Blair's report on the new banner introduced for the first time at the Victoria festival.

In order to provide members more time, the due date for nominations to the William C. Blair Youth Award is extended to June 30. Please submit your nominations soon!

Please consider your personal involvement in your State Clan and/or the CBS leadership team. I encourage your sharing ideas with High Commissioner Bill Blair at CBSclantent1@clanblair.org or me.

It is a Great Day to be a Scot - Sláinte!
Jim Blair president@clanblair.org

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HIGH COMMISSIONER'S REPORT (First Part of Report)

Bill Blair, Oregon

Bill sent the following report on his return from the 155th Victoria Highland Games: "What an experience! Three things stand out:

1. The new Blair banner functioned perfectly, and drew much attention.
2. Norma and I could not have succeeded without the amazing help of CBS member Dennis Blair and his wife Sherry Wright. Dennis, who has been totally blind since childhood, proudly carried our banner in the opening ceremony on Saturday, and managed to arrange our posters quite aesthetically on the tent walls with a little help from Norma.
3. And the biggie. Are you ready for this? CBS won the first-place medal for best clan tent!



The new Blair Banner

Sixteen clans were represented at the Games. There would have been 17, but one clan was taken out by a very bad car crash on the way to the Games on Friday.



First Place Medal for Best Clan Tent

Highlights (and there were many) included the VIP reception Saturday night in the Officers' Mess at the Bay Street Armory.

The torchlight ceremony on the steps of the Parliament Building was quite impressive. Each clan's representative was given a torch to carry to the microphone and introduce his/her clan, then we descended to the lawn in front of the building, forming a saltire to honor St. Andrew, Scotland's patron saint. A cruise ship had just pulled into the sea wall across from the Parliament, and we were inundated with tourists, mostly Asian, with a billion cameras, all wanting pictures taken with the kilted clansmen. Although the Games included the World Championships in the heavy events, I was pretty much tied to the tent so didn't

get to see much of the large men (and women) in skirts throwing heavy objects. I did hear that at least one world record was set.

I did make some important contacts among the clan representatives, not the least of which was a gentleman named Randy Stewart. In addition to being the coordinator of clan activities, Randy is quite a collector of historic memorabilia, including the largest piece of Prince Charlie’s tartan known to exist. He told me that among the historic documents in his collection are, he thinks, several letters from the Blairs during the Jacobite period. I will follow up with him to see what he has and might be willing to part with, or at least to photocopy for our CBS archives.

Slàinte! Bill

William Blair, FSA Scot
 High Commissioner
 Clan Blair Society
 (503) 449-0129

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DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND

“Our NZ Scottish Town”

Submitted by Adoree Blair

Dunedin was settled by Scottish immigrants who arrived in New Zealand in 1848. Dunedin is the 2nd-largest city in New Zealand. In 2014, Dunedin was named New Zealand’s first UNESCO City of Literature. This permanent title recognizes that the identity of the city is strongly tied to values supportive of literature and education. The city is dominated by a large statue of Robert Burns, Scotland’s premiere poet.



New Zealand Kiwi Birds (National Bird)



Dunedin, New Zealand



Old Railway Station, Dunedin



Old Knox Church, Dunedin

Jim and I traveled to New Zealand in March 2018, and we thoroughly enjoyed the experience. We visited several city sites including the Old Knox Church and the Dunedin Railway Station. We enjoyed the city murals on the side of buildings (‘Dunedin Street Murals’) that depicted the history and values of the city. Because we were on a cruise ship, we had the limited time to explore of only one day, but we felt proud that

day of our Scottish heritage! The city was lively and the people there were enthusiastic to share with tourists. At the Dunedin Railway Station, locals dressed as 1800's passengers pretended to wait for a train. There was a fully outfitted Scotsman (who had immigrated from Scotland a few years back) who met us at the Old Knox Church and traveled with us to our next stop at an historic house where we were served tea, scones, sandwiches, scotch, and, of course, haggis. Jim was chosen to don a ridiculous wig and apron and join in the presentation of the haggis with similarly clad tourists. What fun!



Your esteemed Clan Blair President, Jim Blair, dressed for presentation of the haggis

If you find that New Zealand becomes your destination, don't forget to include Dunedin!

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**A FAMOUS SCOTTISH QUEEN –
MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS**

Born in Scotland in 1542, Mary was the heir to the Scottish throne via her father, King James V. She spent most of her childhood in France following the early death of her mother, (King James V was dead by then also) as she was engaged as a baby to one of France's royal

princes. The prince died when he and Mary were not quite grown, and Mary was returned to Scotland, where she was crowned.

Mary's life was interesting, as she was claimed by Catholics to be their heir to the Scottish AND English throne, as her cousin, Queen Elizabeth I, was Protestant. England had suffered bloody years of battle about religion through the reign of Elizabeth's older sister, Mary Tudor (Bloody Mary) who was also Catholic.

Elizabeth I was one of three children of King Henry VIII. Her brother died when he was young, and her older sister, Mary (Bloody Mary) was ardently Catholic. Thousands of innocent Protestants died under Bloody Mary's reign before she died young and Elizabeth came to the throne. The history is complicated, but Elizabeth was also the daughter of Anne Bolyen, who Henry VIII changed the religion of England to Protestant to marry. Later, he had Elizabeth's mother Anne beheaded when Anne failed to produce a male heir. So, there was a lot of controversy over Catholic vs. Protestant in the world at that time. The controversy caused heightened feelings in Elizabeth, worried about any threat to her throne.



Mary, Queen of Scotland

The interaction between Elizabeth and Mary, even though they never met in person, was interesting.

Elizabeth chose Mary's husband, Henry Darnley (who was rumored to be a suitor of Elizabeth). Henry Darnley was the father of Mary's only child, James. Darnley died in mysterious circumstances in Scotland soon after James was born. Elizabeth felt that Mary had plotted Darnley's death, but it was never proven.



Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley However, Mary then 'took up with' another suitor, The Earl of Bothwell. Bothwell and Mary created a Scottish army and prepared to march on England. The plan failed, and Mary was imprisoned in a castle on the English border by Elizabeth. She lived there for many years, writing her cousin Elizabeth of her devotion to Elizabeth. (The Earl of Bothwell was imprisoned in Norway until he died.)



The Earl of Bothwell

There were many rumors of other countries coming to the aide of Mary, releasing her from prison and placing her on the English throne. In response, Queen Elizabeth, with a heavy heart, ordered Mary beheaded. Mary died in 1587 in England. She was 44 years old.

When Elizabeth died some years later, she named James, Mary's son, as the King of England and Scotland, thus uniting the countries. This unification is still controversial in some places in Scotland, as we know.

(A sad footnote to Queen Mary's death is that her pet Skye terrier went with her to the block, hidden under her skirts.



When Mary died, the little dog emerged, whining. He thereafter refused to eat and died soon after Mary.)

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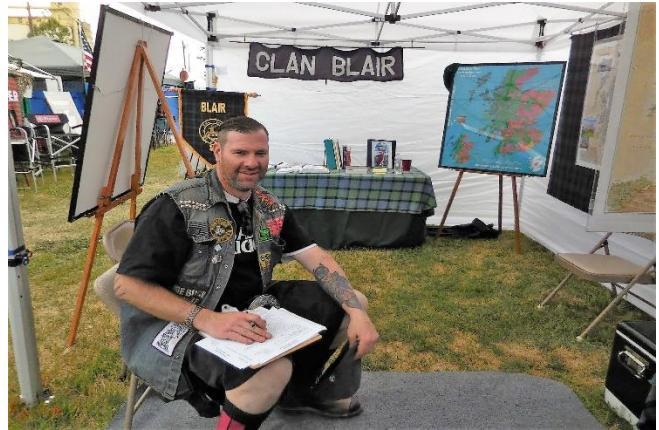
**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
COMMISSIONERS REPORT**

Russell McCrary, No CA Commissioner

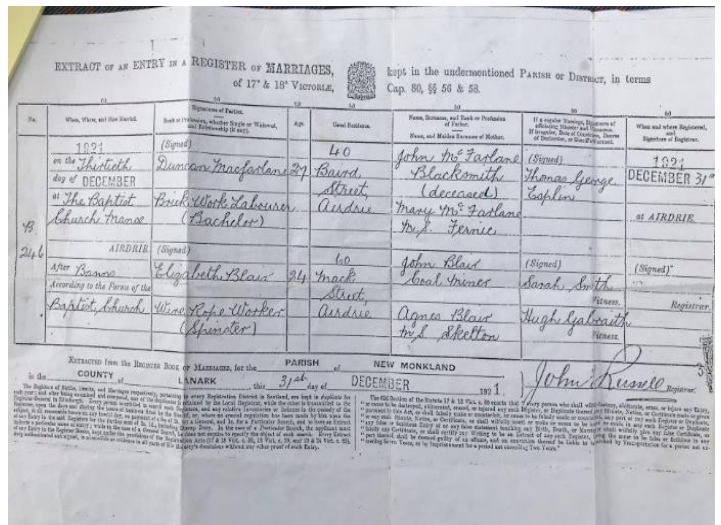
The Highland Games here in Northern California started off with some typical Scottish weather. We were all ready to set up the tents for the first festival of the year at Ardenwood Park to celebrate Tartan Day and it rained the day before and the day of the festival. With two inches of rain there was no need to set up in a muddy field, so we will hope for better weather next year.

With better weather in the forecast our next festival was a big success. Under new management, the Woodland Celtic Games & Festival at the Yolo County Fairgrounds, held April 28th & 29th, had two days of sunshine and light winds. While we were setting up the tents

we visited with many other clans and have come to make some wonderful friends over the last two years. Clan Munro, Cochrane, Anderson and many others lent a hand where needed. The Scots stick together you know! Both days of the festival, Clan Blair had a steady stream of festival participants looking for information about Clan Blair and possible family connections. For the clan tents, we have two large maps of Scotland with genealogy and DNA information which brings in many people looking for a family name. We give help to all, no matter what clan they may be looking for. They take shots from our reference books with their smartphones and are always thankful for our time and devotion. We were visited by a Mr. McFarland who had a number of family documents and a picture was taken (included in newsletter) with some Blair family history which may be useful for a member's research. We visited with many festival goers who showed an interest in joining Clan Blair and two new clan members did register. A warm welcome to Trevor from Oakland, CA, and Robin Elizabeth Robinson from Sacramento, CA. Congratulations to our cousins the Cochrane's for winning best Clan award.



New Member Trevor from Oakland, CA



The Mc Farland Document

The next festival on the calendar is June 9th & 10th in Plymouth, CA. It is the 3rd Annual Mother Lode Highland Games & Celtic Festival. Clan Blair will be setting up tents for the first time at this gathering so come and join us.

We wish all Clan Blair members a safe summer . Have a great time at any and all Highland Games in your area.



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CLAN BLAIR IN VICTORIA, 2018

Bill Blair, High Commissioner

Before the memories dim, I must record the highlights of Clan Blair Society's first appearance in the 155 consecutive years of the Victoria Highland Games and Celtic Festival, and to give special thanks to my partner at the Games, Norma Corristan. Thanks also to our newly-met "cousins", Dennis Blair and Sherry Wright of Port Angeles, WA, for their amazing and enthusiastic help and support in successfully pulling off this adventure.



The Victoria Highland Games is the third-oldest such event in North America, held in conjunction with the week-long Victoria Days Festival in British Columbia's capitol city. Attendance this year: approximately 25,000.

For those who have not been there, Victoria is a unique gem of a city on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. The only way to get there, of course, is by air or by sea. Ferries run from five mainland ports to six ports on the island. There are numerous ferry crossings operating from Canada to Vancouver Island. From the US, there are three ferries to Vancouver Island, only two of which transport vehicles. The third, the Victoria Clipper, has passenger service only.



We discovered Dennis and Sherry through Clan Blair Society. During an exchange of email correspondence, they invited us to spend a night with them before taking the M.V. Coho – the Black Ball Line Ferry – from Port Angeles to Victoria. In addition to having the advantage of staying with newly-found cousins, embarking from Port Angeles had the significant advantages of totally avoiding Seattle's notorious traffic. (substituting a drive up the scenic Olympic peninsula from Olympia on Hwy 101), and putting us ashore in James Bay, Victoria, just a few blocks from our hotel.



We elected to stay at the James Bay Inn and Suites, a quaint old early 20th century hotel that has been upgraded without losing its Edwardian charm, but also without the upgrade of an elevator. Very good restaurant in the hotel, by the way. Our great regret is that we had no time for touring Victoria. Butchart Gardens, the museums, Craigdarroch Castle, high tea at the Empress Hotel, shopping in Baston Square. And other such delights will have to await another visit.

One unexpectedly jarring note about Canadian currency: In 2011, paper money was replaced with plastic money – paper-thin sheets of brightly colored polymer that don't really fold crisply, sometimes stick together, and feel sort of slimy. They were substituted for paper because they are next to impossible to counterfeit. \$1 and \$2 bills have been replaced with coins – the "loonie" and "tooney," as they are popularly known. Visa and Mastercard (both debit and credit) work just fine in Canada, and the exchange rate is taken care of for you.

From the hotel to Topaz Park, venue for the Games, was an easy two-mile drive up Blanshard Street (Rte

17, the main north-south route on Vancouver Island). We were warned that parking could be problematic, but we were fortunate to arrive early enough each day to find a spot next to the heavy events field from with volunteers and army reserves with ATVs carted our gear down to “Clan Avenue” on Friday, and back up on Saturday. With the help of VHGA volunteers and army reservists doing the heavy lifting, setting up our tent was almost a breeze.



Sixteen clans were represented. Representatives for a seventeenth clan were involved in a very bad traffic accident on the way to Victoria, leaving their clan unrepresented.

Clan Avenue was centrally located in the venue, so there was lots of traffic in front of our tent – including Scott Blair from Victoria who became our newest member at the games. To swell the traffic along Clan Avenue, falconers from the falconry display tent up the hill from Clan Avenue would wander about with their gorgeous birds tethered on their gloved arms.



In addition to the traditional events (including the World Championships of the heavy events), there was world-class competition in traditional Highland dancing, Irish step-dancing (I think River Dance), pipe

band competition, pibroch competition, pipe major competition, and one-on-one edged weapon competition (no lives or limbs lost in this event). The Victoria Genealogical Society made special arrangements with the National Records of Scotland (NRS) which maintains all available records of Scotland its people going back to the 11th century. VGS set up several computers with direct online access to the NRS database, and trained researchers were there to help anyone searching for missing ancestors, at no charge.



Dennis Blair proudly carried our new CBS parade banner behind Clan Barclay at the head of the procession.





For the clans, the festivities began the night before with a VIP reception at the Bay Street Armory Officers' Mess. VIPs were VHGA board members, athletes, and clan representatives. Excellent selection of single malts and ales at the no-host bar. The opportunity to self-tour the regimental museum adjacent to the Officers Mess was enjoyed. The Bay Street Armory is headquarters to the Canadian Scottish Regiment ("Princess Mary's") and the 5th B.C. Field Artillery.





(See page 2 for a photo of the clan tent medal and more detail

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PIPES AND DRUMS – DO YOU KEN IF YOU WANT TO PLAY?

Submitted by Charlie Diman

The Balmoral School of Music has several classes beginning in June, 2018. To find out more, go to:

www.balmoralpipesanddrums.org

or call: 412 323 2707

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RECORDED BROADCASTS FOR MEMBERS

The March 2018 CBS Webinar is available, along with all webinar-hosted presentations by the CBS Board, for your viewing. You can find them on the Members-Only website at:

<http://members.clanblair.org>

Please let Shawn Blair know if you have questions or encounter difficulty viewing these wonderful programs. (weblaird@clanblair.org)

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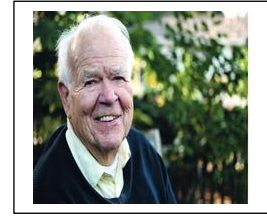
Bill Blair



WILLIAM CAMPBELL BLAIR

Youth Award Nomination Form

5/1/18



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

Please complete the following information and submit your nomination no later than June 30.

Name of Youth: _____ Date of Birth: _____ (18 years old or younger)

Name of Nominating CBS Member: _____
Relationship: _____

Mailing
Address: _____

Nominee Contact Information: Email: _____
Telephone: _____

Nominating Member Contact:
Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Category of Outstanding Performance/Success:
_____ The Arts; Academics; Athletics;
Clan Blair Society Support; Other

Provide a detailed description of the nominee's activities that achievements for which the nomination is being made:

- 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
 - iv. , fund raising, etc.
5. Nominations are invited in the February newsletter for submission by June 1.
 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
 8. news coverage in the Blair Bruidhinn (and other Celtic publications associated with CBS)

Questions may be sent to Jim Blair at president@clanblair.org, or 1-303-795-9754



TREASURE WAITING TO BE FOUND

CBS Library Report

Elena McCrary

One of the real joys for me is calling the Ellen Payne Odom Genealogical Library in Moultrie, Georgia, and being connected to Irene Godwin. The sound of her melodic voice transports me back in time, and sometimes I forget why I actually called. I spoke with Irene recently to find out how the progress of renovations was going. It was no surprise then, to find things were behind schedule. Since Russ has worked in construction his whole career I know only too well the changes to original plans. Throw in inclement weather and you have a true challenge. Not unlike members searching for information and not finding an answer.

So, when we host the Blair tents we have lots of visitors “asking for leads” about their ancestors. All commissioners should have these essential titles, but if you do not please let me know. Getting information to those who seek is my mission. 1. *The Family of James Blair and Nancy Day* compiled by Roger D. Grider, M.D.; 2. *Blairlin II with BlairTrees* compiled by Preston E. Groome; 3. *The Blair Family of New England Revisited* by Mary J. Powers; 4. *The Annotated 1850 Census for Blairs in the United States*.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1vg8cK9tee9srx2ZVAa kmUjlyVbobtDaf>



Irene relayed recently that due to *The Scottish Collection* being boxed up until re-opening which could be November or December (work began March 1, 2018), she has only the County of Georgia information available for researchers. So, I asked, “How could we (The Clan Blair Society) help improve her work? She stated she does a lot of scanning, and the library could use another scanner. So, I wondered if any of our members had over the years ever requested materials (a page or two) scanned and sent electronically to you in an email? In any case, I believe moving forward, this might be a topic of interest to all of us, and we might want to consider her request. I am following up with an email to Irene for more details.

BOOKS/MAPS/OTHER RESOURCES – Are there Blair family members or relatives of a Blair who wish to donate any items to the Genealogical library? We are happy to add them to the Clan Blair Collection. Need to know more? Please contact Elena McCrary at CBSLibrary@clanblair.org or call my phone at (925) 658-2731.

Taitneamh a bhaint as an tsamhraidh – Enjoy the summer – Elena McCrary



Clan Blair Society

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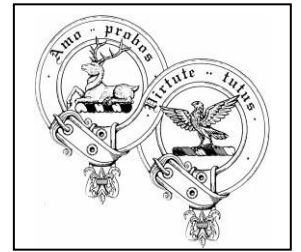
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