



BLAIR BRUIDHINN

Blair of Blair

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

Blair of Balthayock

“Blair Talk” for Clan Blair Society

www.clanblair.org

Fourth Quarter – November 2009

Jim Blair – Colorado Clan Congregation

The Clan presented a colorful group of 20 members at the Longs Peak Scottish Festival in Estes Park, CO the second weekend of September. Fifteen members marched in the Festival parade with regular reminders to the crowd of several thousand, our Clan Yell “deBlar-deBlar-deBlar” and “Everything’s Better in a Kilt”!

Our Clan booth received dozens of visitors with registration of three new members. While enjoying the festival and camaraderie we planned our January Burns Supper and participation of the Clan in Denver’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade in March 2010.

We toasted our newest member scheduled to arrive in early December – the daughter to be of Erynn Blair Shryack and Nick Shryack. Grammy Adoree Blair is preparing a mini-kilt for her. Trudy Blair and Leslie Blair Gallagher are our newest kilt makers. Both have fine skills in making all things Scottish.



Front, Scott Roberts, Gregory Ballard (head down), Anthony Ballard (hidden), Quinnlan Blair, Saoirse Blair Galligan, Torin Blair holding Atia Blair, Arabella Blair, Jim Blair.

Second row, Dyani Blair Galligan holding Tiernan Blair Galligan, Erynn Blair Shryack, Trudi Blair, Chelsea Blair, Adoree Blair (peeking), Noah Blair Tichey, Kathy Moore, Erin Blair Gallagher, Leslie Blair Gallagher. *Back*, Nick Shryack, Benjamin Blair, Jonny Blair, Suzie Clarke, Quaintance Blair, Mike Galligan

Nominating Committee, Jim Blair

The CBS Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for leadership rolls for 2010. The Committee will present candidates for the positions of president, vice-president,

treasurer and secretary for election by the membership. The Committee is also seeking candidates for membership chair and store manager. Please send the names of nominees to Jim Blair at jeblair@msn.com.

Clan Blair DNA Project, Jim Blair

At the 2009 AGM, the Clan Blair Board of Directors approved the establishment of a fund to aid members in getting a DNA test. DNA testing is available only to direct Blair male descendants. CBS will pay a portion of the cost of a 25-marker DNA test performed by Family Tree DNA, the testing company used by the Blair DNA Project.

Upon request and an explanation of the goals, CBS will contribute between 30-50% of the cost of the DNA test. Blair ancestral lines will be the focus, but other Blair lines will be considered upon request. The CBS Board of Directors will review and approve request for funding.

Clan member requests for funding must include the ancestral research conducted by the member, the member’s intent to conduct the DNA test in a timely manner, 30-45 calendar days, and a commitment to share the results with the Blair DNA Project.

Members must in good standing of CBS to be eligible to participate in this sponsorship program. For questions, contact Jim Blair at jeblair@msn.com.

Helen Blair, President’s Message



For Clan Blair Society to survive we need volunteers! Bob and I took on several positions because of difficulty finding volunteers. We are both retired and now have health issues that make it impossible carry out our present duties. This January starts a CBS election year and we need candidates for president, vice president and treasurer along with the non-elected position of membership chair. Bob was to train someone to take his place before he had his first stroke Sept 12, then a second stroke that affected his speech and mobility.

I can keep the CBS store for a while; we have room at our house to store the merchandise. Andy will help us with all the Arizona Games. We still need Commissioners to host Clan Blair tents at Highland Games in many states plus a High Commissioner to work with State Commissioners.

We need a public relations person to help promote CBS events and a genealogist to help run the Blairlin database and DNA fund project. Please contact our Nominating Committee – **John Blair** of VA coachblair@aol.com, **Jim Blair** of CO jeblair@msn.com 303-795-9754, or 540-587-9416, **Pat Risdon** of MI risdon2p@hotmail.com or 517-651-6960. Please help keep Clan Blair Society alive and volunteer for its survival. Aye, Helen Blair

Clan Blair Society Store

I hope to create a catalog of our merchandise. I just re-ordered more pewter-art jewelry, along with kilt pins, cap badges, necklaces, belt buckles, cuff links and lapel pins. Bob wanted a machine to print tee shirts, but now I will need to find another supplier. CBS offers the best prices online at Clanblair.org – click on CBS Store.

Clan Blair Treasury

Our treasury is still healthy despite the recent economic downfall. Our latest big purchases have been for Blair genealogical books for our active Commissioners to have at their tents. Visitors can research their heritage there or order the books for themselves.

Clan Blair Membership

We hope to transfer the membership database to a more user-friendly application and a new manager.

2010 AGM

Many thanks to Wyomia Blair and her nephew Dale Granger who are going to host the 2010 AGM. This is when the election results are announced and the new board members will take over. The AGM will be June 5-6 at the Greater Greenville Scottish Games and Highland Festival in Greenville, SC.

2010 CBS Scotland Trip

Dick Holt has worked long and hard to set up a trip of a lifetime, but regret to report that it has been postponed. See Dick's report or contact Dick at blairtrip@aol.com.

Dick Holt – CBS Tour of Scotland Delayed



While planning for the 2010 trip to Scotland, we encountered new obstacles reflecting the world's economic situation that will delay our trip for one year.

The proposed itinerary had price increases over previous trips and the increases reflect inflation, the current economic climate and a significantly changed market in Scotland. The UK Pound is quite weak against the Euro, used by most of Europe, so large numbers of English and Scots are vacationing in Scotland rather than traveling to mainland Europe. Scotland's hotels, attractions and transportation bookings are much higher than before. The biggest

obstacle was the large, non-refundable deposits that were required. The CBS Board decided the risks were too great and deferred the trip for a year.

Our licensed tour planner is using our 2010 itinerary as the guide and scheduling everything the same days of August-September in 2011. He advises that we should plan for about a five-percent increase due to inflation, but promises to do everything possible to minimize escalation.

Dick Holt, Blairtrip@aol.com

Wyomia Blair South Carolina Commissioner

My Blair family annual reunion was on October 4 at the Emmanuel Baptist Church, which has been our family church for over a hundred years. We had 30 people in attendance. Several of them were descendants of Thomas Vance Blair my great uncle, who we had not met before. My nephew Dale showed us his intensive genealogy research on our family going back to James Blair born in 1704. He has created a detailed descendant chart showing nine generations of our Blair family.

Dale and I will host the Blair Annual General Meeting at the Greenville Scottish Games next June 5-6. HRH Prince Harry is coming to the U.S. and he will be awarding the Duke of Edinburgh Award at the Miss South Carolina and Miss Teen South Carolina Pageant at the Games.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a motivational and skill-building program for young people between 14 and 24 founded in 1956 in the UK. There are three progressive levels that, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. With assistance from adult leaders, participants select and set objectives in each of the following areas: Volunteering in the community. Physical sports, dance or fitness activities. Skills: practical and social skills and personal interests. Expedition: plan and complete an adventurous journey.

Ann Fredline – Idaho Commissioner

The Boise Celtic Highland Games took place on September 26 and the weather was sunny and warm, a plus for the games. A good-size crowd turned out for the games this year with the heavy athletic events and the different types of dances drawing the biggest attention. Despite the largest all-women 5K run in the Northwest occurring on the same day, we had a record number of people in attendance. Several people with a connection to the Blair name stopped by the tent to show their support and numerous other people stopped by wanting to learn more about Clan Blair Society.

William Campbell Blair Northern California Commissioner



Allen Rountree, Bill Blair and Max Blair at Pleasanton

Our last Northern California Games for this year was in Pleasanton over Labor Day weekend. Although it is often one of the hottest weekends of the year, we enjoyed comfortable weather. This is one of the largest Scottish Festivals in the world and was most enjoyable visiting old friends and the Scottish activities.

I am particularly indebted to Max Blair of Dublin for his enormous help and support throughout the weekend, including helping set up and take down our tent.

Other CBS members who visited included our Newsletter Editor Allen Rountree, Betty Fussell of Sunnyvale, Julia Carapanos of Walnut Creek, John McFarland of Woodland, Barbara Bradley of Sunol, Life Member Karen Blair, Max's daughter Heather Blair of Livermore, former member John Blair Bowers of Oakland and Bill and Francis Lloyd of Danville. Bill and Francis graciously provided me with grandstand tickets to see the fantastic closing ceremony, which was a very special treat.

The banner above our tent, with a California Grizzly Bear in the lower section, represents my own Arms that I matriculated with the Lord Lyon King of Arms. If anyone is interested in obtaining his or her own Arms, please contact me for further information. Bbblair@comcast.net

Lynne Dolan – New York Commissioner

This year at the Westbury Gardens, Clan MacDuff held its 49th Scottish Games, but we did not think it was going to happen because of heavy rain. Jay and I set up our tent and it was damp, but turned out to be grand day for the Games. This year we had over five Blair families and

some old friends stop by our tent to visit; many of them commented how glad they were to see Clan Blair here.

When I was a bank teller in Williston Park, I had a customer who had a thistle patch on his car and when I asked about it, he told me about the Scottish Games at Westbury Gardens. Who would have thought 15-years later, I would have a clan tent there. The bank customer was Robert Small, Past Chief of Clan MacDuff and a re-enactor with the 42nd Royal Highland Regiment. He stopped by to visit and said to say hello to Shawn Blair.

The athletic competitions were exciting because the big men were awesome and the Scottish music was excellent. The Scottish Country dancers were there along with the Ryan Academy Irish Step Dancers, which I love to watch and would like to try someday...

This year, I purchased seven yards of our tartan twill material from the Clan Blair store and had a hoop skirt made for my Civil War wardrobe. Of course, I had to get a Civil War blouse with lace. I wore my new outfit to a headstone dedication for Civil War soldier, Private Ezra Preasall, 127th NY on September 26 (*right photo*). The skirt made a big hit and everyone said they loved the "plaid" – I explained that it was "Scottish tartan" *and* my family's Clan Blair tartan. If the weather is right, I plan to wear it for Remembrance Day Parade in Gettysburg, PA this year.

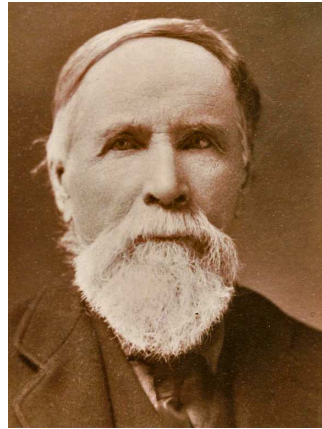
At this year's Scottish Games, I bought a Glengarry style bonnet, to which I added a Blair tartan ribbon under the boutonniere. Now all I need is a period shawl or jacket to complete my outfit.



The kilted officer above represents the 79th New York Highlanders that was the only kilted regiment to represent the Union Army in the American Civil War and was comprised mostly of Scots and Scottish-Americans. Colonel Samuel McKenzie Elliott, an oculist from Staten Island, was the original commander of the 79th New York Militia. The regiment was comprised mostly of Scottish immigrants and Scottish-Americans. They wore kilts (only

for parade dress) and trews (trousers) made in the tartan of the 79th Cameron Highlanders, a Scottish regiment of considerable fame and reputation. Many of the original members came from the New York Highland Guard and were members of the New York Caledonian Club and the Saint Andrew's Society of New York.

Great-grandfather Martin G. Blair by Barbara Blair Pixley, Penn Valley, CA



Barbara Pixley, daughter Christy, g-daughter Kaia, Martin Blair

Martin G. Blair, born 1831 PA, had a sawmill and lumber yard in College Springs, Iowa and was a carpenter, contractor and farmer in Clarinda, Iowa. He moved to a farm in Steele City, Nebraska, and then in 1904 to a farm in Lexington, Nebraska. His grandchildren and the neighborhood children were quite fond of him. He spent his last years dividing his time between the homes of his two sons, Uncle Vern Blair and my grandfather Dr. Fred Blair. The following is an abstract from a letter written by one his granddaughters, Roberta Blair Bird, daughter of Uncle Vern Blair about her memories of her grandfather on the family farm in Nebraska.

Grandpa Blair on the Farm Our grandfather Martin Blair was an ardent farmer and he had a blacksmith shop with bellows and all the equipment to repair machinery, horse harnesses or anything around the farm.

He even made his own paint and kept a good supply of linseed oil and turpentine to preserve wooden fixtures in the barn and house. He also planted the garden, making sure he had Hubbard Squash for delicious “pumpkin” pies that my mother made. I can remember him churning butter and licking his lips, as he tasted the buttermilk and encouraging us to like buttermilk too.

After breakfast, we children would grab lunch buckets and homework and hike two miles to school. In winter, when it was cold and windy, all three of us rode horse back on “Old Pat” who helped keep us warm. Our grandfather built the school that we attended. He also built the huge horse barn that’s still standing today, but in need of repair.

Sampson and Marilou Blair New York Commissioners

Greetings from Buffalo! In April, we participated in the Tartan Day celebration in Rochester, New York. Although the weather was still a bit cool, we did not mind, as the entire festival was inside the Rochester Armory building. If you have never heard a massed bagpipe band indoors, we highly recommend it – loud and impressive!

In August, we attended the Amherst Museum Scottish Festival, one of the larger ones here and always attracts thousands of people. Our clan tent was adjacent to the athletic events field, so we had to keep an eye out for an errant stone throw or caber toss!

The following weekend, we packed up our tent and headed south for the Jamestown Regional Celtic Festival that continues to grow each year as it attracts bands, performers and athletes from New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Although the festival is well organized, Mother Nature presented several inches of rain. Surprisingly, many of the spectators stayed throughout and on to the closing ceremonies. By the end of the day, we were all soaked and had to pack up our tents during a thunderstorm. But hey, that’s just typical Scottish weather!

Our last event was the Niagara Celtic Festival in Olcott, New York. This festival is always a treat located in the town park on the shores of Lake Ontario. The organizers and merchants from the town go to great lengths to include activities for young and old. Amazingly, a motorcycle biker event was in the town the same weekend and many bikers came over to our festival. It was quite a sight to see people in kilts, mixing with bikers, but it worked out well. We even had two Blairs from the biker event wanting to know how they could join the clan!



Marilou, Isabelle and Sampson Blair at the Amherst Museum Scottish Festival in August. This was Isabelle's last festival for the year; she is attending SUNY Geneseo about 90-miles away, majoring in biology and hopes to become a medical researcher.

John and Judy Blair
15th Annual Meadowlands Highland Games
at the Virginia State Fairgrounds

This October was the first games at the Virginia State Fair's new location in Doswell. The newly acquired grounds are the birthplace of the Triple Crown winner Secretariat. They were formally the Richmond Games and Highland Festival. The new site is choice property with beautiful views and indoor bathroom facilities!

Fifty-eight Clans attended along with 12 pipe bands, including the NYPD pipe band. What a spectacular display and stirring pipes at the opening ceremony! Saturday turned out to be quite wet, but the athletic competitors kept right on. Sunday was gloriously sunny and several folks with Blair ancestry stopped by for information and a hot bowl of Judy's spicy chili!

Our tent was located perfectly – we were able to view the competition on the fields and close to the vendors and musical entertainment. The theatrical comedy group “The Noble Blades” was near by so we had a “front row seat” to some funny skits and swordplay.



John and Judy Blair, daughter Sarah, son Christopher, his wife Tonya and their daughter Ella

The last great competition of the day was the annual Pumpkin Chunking Contest. The winner receives a free tent for next year's games and our son Christopher represented Clan Blair. Unfortunately, no one was able to beat the 90+ feet that won. Christopher is two and a half-year-old daughter Ella, yelled, “That's all right Daddy, good job!” It was the perfect ending to a great weekend.

Editor's Note: Hoot Mon, maybe hot chili and pumpkin chunking will become new traditions at Scottish Games. I would like to hear from other members who have included or experienced unique activities at their Scottish Games.

Frances Holt, Bud and Vicky Bartlett
Southern California Commissioners

What an enjoyable weekend at the Seaside Games at Ventura, California in October. The weather was great with many visits from members and visitors – a good number attending for the first time. It was fun to discuss all things Scottish and share our Clan activities. Frances displayed her wonderful quilt and photo album of the Clan Blair trips to Scotland.

Unfortunately, Bud was not up to par, but Frances and Vicky had much appreciated help setting up, greeting, and closing from Frances' friend Pat Woods of Whittier. We enjoyed seeing members Bryan and Jamie Blair of Burbank, and their friend Cassidhe Holke of Murrieta and members Erin Blair of Laguna Niguel and Dianne Woodcroft of Crestline. We welcomed new member Maureen Blair of Santa Paula. Brian Blair proudly wears his dad's tartan, the late Lawrence Blair a CBS Commissioner, and was a big help at the tent as well.

Other visitors included Lori Poole and Jesse Blair of Ventura; Kenneth and Bev Small of Bonita; Bob and Lynn Howe; Robert Howe Jr. of Thousand Oaks; Susannah Mosher and Adam Stevenson of North Hollywood.

The Sunday morning Blessing of the Tartan was a solemn and reflective time, as one by one we brought our tartans forward, identified our clan, gave our motto and took a place in front of the congregation.

Whit Young, Bountiful, Utah
Scottish Historian and CBS Member

A year ago, I first wrote an article for the Blair Newsletter telling of our production, “An Affirmation of Freedom” which in film, art and miniature diorama tells the story of **Robert the Bruce, Bannockburn and the fight for Scottish Independence.**

This year we set up our display at the Salt Lake City Games held at Lehi, Utah and again at the Longs Peak Games at Estes Park, Colo. The latter was very successful with the largest attendance to date and we increased our crew to 15 people. We now have seven tents in all to accommodate a larger educational-art exhibit in an extended entrance leading into the larger “theater” tent.

My granddaughters dress in medieval costume, run our small store and pass out show flyers. Unfortunately, a sudden and powerful freak wind blew down and destroyed our store tent. Everyone pitched in, including our audience to get books, DVDs, prints, toy swords and jewelry out of the rain and dried in time for the show. The store helps to defray the expense of bringing all this to the Games.

In the accompanying photo, you can see most of the crew at breakfast in our long entranceway doubling as a dining hall and an example of a poster on the left.



Left, my eldest son David, son-in-law Mike Lawyer, daughter Becky, granddaughter Melissa, grandsons William and Brigham. Across the table youngest son Dan, granddaughters Anna and Lizzy, tolerant wife Rosemary, my youngest granddaughter Meg

It is a lot of work, but these productions bring our family together with an increased sense of appreciation for their Scottish heritage and family history. Thank you so much, Clan Blair, for your generous contribution last year. Sincerely, Whit Young

Editor's Note: For a colorful, interesting and instructive photo-tour of the Battle of Bannockburn and Scottish history, see Whit's attractive website at www.lionshield.us.

Peggy Baker, Kansas Commissioner

Editor Rountree, I am in awe about your ability to include the colorful Blair tartan and the nice large font in your newsletter e-mails!

Clan Blair had a tent at the McPherson, Kansas 11th Annual Scottish Festival held the third weekend in September at the city park, with towering trees and a lovely meandering creek. They wisely put the sheepherding demonstrations a wee distance from the ducks and swans in the creek so that the restive collies did not try to herd them into proper small circles. A very friendly gatherin' of the clans; we had several guests sign in and search through our Blairlin genealogy book.

A Heart-felt Scottish Farewell

As a bagpiper, a funeral director asked me to play at a graveside service for a homeless man who had no family or friends. The funeral was at a cemetery in the remote countryside and this man would be the first to be laid to

rest there. As I was not familiar with the backwoods area, I became lost, but I finally arrived an hour late.

I saw the backhoe and the crew who were eating lunch, but the hearse had left. I apologized to the workers for my tardiness and stepped to the side of the open grave where I saw the vault lid already in place. I assured the workers I would not hold them up for long, but this was the proper thing. The workers gathered around, still eating their lunches.

I played as I had never played before, from *Going Home*, *The Lord is My Shepherd* to *Flowers of the Forest*, and all the workers were weeping. I closed with *Amazing Grace* and as I walked to my car, I overheard one of the workers saying to the others, "My Lord, I never seen nothin' like that before and I've been putting in septic tanks for twenty years."

Barbara "Blair" Kirker from West Africa

Just a note to update our activities here in Maine-Soroa, Niger, West Africa. As you may remember, I started a "second chance" primary school for disenfranchised children three years ago for children left out of the regular system. This year we enrolled 120 students in five classes and will have student body next year of about 160.

The work at the hospital that Bill and I founded, The Kirker Hospital – named in our honor, continues to expand and has many patients. We have 142 beds with an active outpatient center seeing over 100 people a day. Plans are under way to build a new diagnostic center for the hospital, which will combine modern imaging and laboratory facilities and a new emergency-receiving room.

Exciting times for us here in the isolated "bush area" of Maine-Soroa. Look us up on a good map of Africa; we are just beside Lake Chad in Niger. After the first of the year, Bill and I will retire and there is a wonderful group of Seventh Day Adventist Missionary doctors, nurses, and teachers coming out to take over our work here.

My maternal grandmother was a Blair from Scotland and Bill is a Maxwell-Sept descendant. Aye, Barbara Kirker

BLAIR BRUIDHINN is published four times a year and is mailed every February 15, May 15, August 15 and November 15. Please send your Scottish events, stories and family genealogy submissions two weeks before the 15th of each publication month to the editor, Allen Rountree at alpha-7@att.net, 408.247.6544



Here is your editor, wearing my dad's WWII Army uniform, while attending a Veteran's Day celebration honoring the "Greatest Generation." I displayed the family 1941 Chevrolet that my dad drove to his defense-job, at the Kaiser Shipyards near San Francisco, as a pipe fitter on ships going to the war in the Pacific. When I was born in 1944, Dad was on leave from the Army and brought Mom and I home from the hospital in "The Chevy." The engine is all original and the paint and upholstery is fully restored including 1941 license plates and a "B" ration sticker.

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