



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

Fourth Quarter – November 2016

President’s Message



Fellow Scots:

Here is wishing you wonderful Thanksgiving. I hope you are celebrating Scottish history and traditions with your families. Our Clan members have enjoyed fall activities and festivals by the dozens and many have included their reports in this newsletter. All have been successful and many new Scots have shown interest in Clan Blair Society. Please contact a CBS State Commissioner near you.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Clan Blair Society was held via webinar broadcast on Nov.

5. More than 20 members participated to hear a full report on CBS activities for the year. Whit Young, Utah Commissioner, presented the history of the Battle of Sterling Bridge in 1297, including a video and diorama, plus he responded to member questions. It included the history of leaders such as Andrew Moray and William Wallace, and was excellent. Thank you, Whit and family, for producing such a wonderful documentary.

The AGM included the results of the bi-annual election of officers. Based on digital voting by our membership in September, the following is the slate of officers for the 2017-18 period:

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|-----------------------|--|
| President – | Jim Blair, Colorado |
| Vice-President – | Shawn Blair, Maine |
| Treasurer – | Ann Fredline, Idaho |
| Secretary – | Frances Holt, California |
| Nominating Committee: | Curtis Blair, Colorado
Charlie Diman, No Carolina
Helen Blair, Arizona |

Many thanks to this leadership team. We work well together on behalf of CBS.

Please consider your personal involvement in your State Clan and/or the CBS leadership team.

- We are seeking volunteer(s) to assist Charlie Diman with the Membership function. Charlie plans to step down from this position in 2017 and a replacement should begin working with him in the next few months.
- We are seeking a volunteer to oversee the CBS library, located at the Odom Library in Moultrie, GA. It houses historical references for Blairs to research their history. The primary duty is to build a relationship with the Odom librarian and oversee member usage.

We welcome new State Commissioners for Northern California, Russell and Elena McCrary. They succeed retiring Dr. Bill Blair (who was one of the CBS founding members). The McCrarys have been involved with Dr. Bill for some time and have energetically jumped into leadership for members in the area covering San Francisco north to the Oregon border. Russell and Elena can be contacted at:

Email – iwrussmccrary@gmail.com
Telephone – 925-719-0324

Curtis Blair, High Commissioner, is seeking innovative ideas about recruiting and development of CBS in your states. Please contact Curtis at cbsclantent1@clanblair.org or me with your ideas.

We look forward to your ideas and energy. The new year approaches and we wish you a very happy holiday season and Hogmanay.

I look forward to your questions and ideas.

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

Jim Blair
president@clanblair.org

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**Annual Business Meeting – CBS Board –
Held 10/22/16**

- All Committees reported operating well
- Treasury – As of 10½ months 2016 Operating Income is plus \$32
- CBS Cash Balance is \$24,444
- CBS Store operated with Net Income of \$606.88 (no debt)
- CBS Library houses 20 books, folders & videos at the Odom Library
- Books may be checked out via the Clan Blair website – Librarian needed
- High Commissioner Report – 10 of 20 States reported
- 10 games attended (low reporting); 10 activities
- Membership Report – 223 members (10 new, 17 loss)
- Webmaster Report – 4,463 visits; 11,000 views; 3,090. Home Page views – updates of pages & web-engine is work-in-progress

Old Business

- Approved annual donation of \$100 to support the work on the Battle of Bannockburn & Stirling Bridge
- Approved annual donation of \$250 to a Scottish History project

New Business

- Approved a \$5 surcharge for paper mailed newsletters in 2017.
- CBS will set a \$25 membership for paper news.
- CBS Librarian needed – Odom Library in Moultrie, GA
- Membership growth initiative – Curtis Blair (ideas?)
- Website redesign initiative –funded – thanks to Shawn Blair & Nick Shryack

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Recorded Broadcasts Available on Members-Only website

All webinar hosted presentations by the CBS Board are available for your viewing on the Members-only website (<http://members.clanblair.org>).

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

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**Membership Report
Charlie Diman – Membership Chair**

As of October 2016, Clan Blair Society membership is:
223 Total members
159 Annual dues paying members
58 Lifetime members
6 Honorary members

During the 2016 membership renewal, 17 members did not renew and we gained 10 new members. Recruiting is most effective during Scottish games where CBS is active. All members – please invite friend and family who might enjoy the spirit and history of Clan Blair.

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Colorado Report

Leslie Blair – Gallagher – Commissioner

As we have reduced our attendance at the numerous Colorado games down to just two, our report is limited.

Our first event of the year was our annual Burns Supper held at Jim and Adoree Blair’s home in Littleton. I think it was our largest group in attendance ever (46). Always a delightful time and a nice way to catch up with each other after the long break from September.

Our second event of the year was the Pikes Peak Celtic Festival in Colorado Springs. It’s a lovely event and we gained two members. Weather was hot, of course. We had a full house though, with Jim Blair attending and bringing along his usual crowd.

Last event of the year for us was the Long’s Peak Scottish Irish Festival in Estes Park. Again, very well attended. There was a debut of two wee Blair kilts as well.



Front Row – L-R – Meaghn Judd, Theresa Cooper, friend, Atia Blair, Arabella Blair, Elisa Campbell, Cordylia Blair Shryack, Kim Blair

2nd Row – L-R – Brian Cooper, Katte Judd, Cheryl Carr, Celton Judd, friend, Lochlann Blair Shryack held by mom Erynn Blair Shryack, Quinnlin Blair, Adoree Blair, friend.

3rd Row – L-R – friend, Kipp Baker, Nick Shryack, Jim Blair, Torin Blair, Leslie Blair-Gallagher, Harold Blair

Lastly, a new Blair was born on 5 October in Reading, England to Erin and Guy Grandison (my daughter and son in law). I hereby present Skye Autumn Gallagher Grandison.



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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REPORT

William Campbell Blair, Commissioner

I hosted our Clan Blair tent at the very large Scottish Games and Festival held Labor Day weekend, September 3, 2016 at the Alameda Co. Fairgrounds, in Pleasanton, CA. This was lots of fun. We had an excellent place for our tent and the weather was perfect with quite a few visitors. Ten of our visitors indicated an interest in Joining our Society. I have contacted each of them with the hope some will actually join.

CBS members attending included Alan Rountree of San Jose (our former newsletter editor), Betty Fussell, Francis and William Lloyd of Danville, Julia Wyrick and her husband of Walnut Creek, and Russell and Elena McCrary of San Ramon.

A totally unexpected honor was bestowed upon us when Clan Blair was awarded the “Best Clan Tent” trophy for 2016 by the Caledonian Club of S.F.

After about 25 years of hosting our Clan tent at various Scottish Games, the time has come when I must step down as Northern California Commissioner. I have thoroughly enjoyed this activity and the many friends I have made and

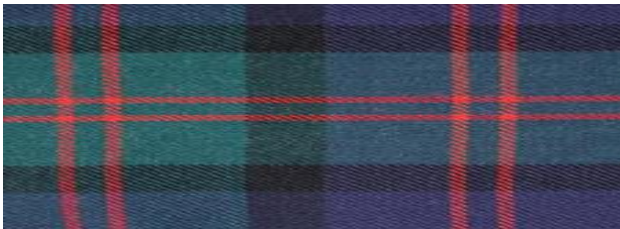
will certainly miss it. I am delighted to report to you that Russell and Elena McCrary will replace me in this position. They are very enthusiastic and friendly, and he is very interested in Blair/McCrary/McCreary genealogy, and I know you will find them very helpful.



Russ and Elena McCrary



Clan Blair Tent, Pleasanton,
Dr. Bill Blair holding “Best Clan Tent” trophy



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**From Bill Blair, Oregon Commissioner, to
Kris Jorgenson,**

Who asked about the Clan Crest/Badge:

Ah, Kris, you ask a simple question requiring a most complicated answer! Here is the background in as small a nutshell as I can stuff it. Take from it what you need, and those who seek more can visit our clan tent.

Clan Blair is the melding of two ancient Scottish clans or families. Today there is no doubt, according to the Lord Lyon Court, that “Blair” is a clan, and that Clan Blair Society is its proper representative. In the late 12th Century, Scotland’s King William I separately granted lands and title to two Blairs. One was the Blair of Blair (sometimes called “Blair of that Ilk”) in Ayrshire. The other was the Blair of Balthayock in Perthshire. Both were barons whose progeny played significant roles in the enfolding history of Scotland over the centuries, but over those same centuries the Barons of Blair and Balthayock vied with each other over primacy of the name Blair. There is no extant evidence that the two original Blairs were related, and good reasons to believe they were not.

Finally, King James VI of Scotland (who later became King James I of the United Kingdom, and commissioned the English translation of the Bible that bears his name), sought to finally end the dispute by

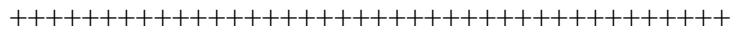
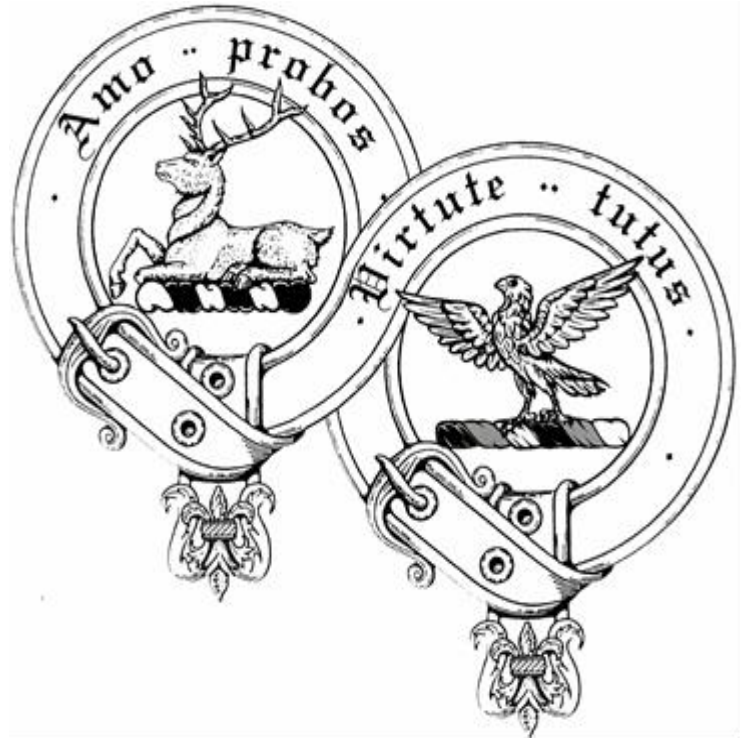
declaring that the eldest of the name, regardless of family, should be Chief of the Name and Clan. In the mid-1700's the line of male primacy in each of the two families became dormant, vacating both baronies and leaving both families without a Chief of Name. The Clan Blair Society, organized in the U.S. in 1988, finally accomplished the effective melding of the two clans, and now has members across the world.



Our crest combines the clan crests of Blair of Blair (the couched stag) and Blair of Balthayock.(the dove with wings extended, rising). The motto of Blair of Blair is “*Amo Probos*”, translated as “I love the virtuous”. The motto of Blair of Balthayock is “*Virtute Tutus*”, translated as “By virtue safe.”

A couple of other minor points:

- There are not and never have been separate tartans for the Blairs of Blair and Blairs of Balthayock. The four tartans registered with the Scottish Register of Tartans under the name “Blair” are all based on the so-called “Modern Blair,” dating from the early 19th Century.
- Blair of Blair is technically a Lowland family, but it is proper to refer to it as a “clan” in the currently accepted sense of the word.
- Blair of Balthayock is a Highland clan, although not a clan deriving from pre-feudal origins.
- There is no significance in the placement of the two clan crest badges in the Clan Blair Society logo.
- The Clan Blair Society recognizes no difference, other than historical and genealogical, between the two ancient Blair clans.



JONNY BLAIR EMAIL 9-16

Colorado Clan Member

Here is a family (Jonny, Chelsea and Melanie) selfie while at the San Diego Zoo on vacation, and a picture of almost the whole crew out sledding (left to right: My Dad (Jon) holding granddaughter Scout, then brother Carson holding daughter Willa Jeanne, and myself holding daughter Melanie).

Slàinte! “



joined us along with former member Vincent Blair who marched with us in the opening ceremony. Friends Jacque, Kristen and Shannon drove down from Phoenix and we met Richard Blair, Paul Blair, Debby Counselor and Paul Foley, all with Blair history. Our Brookbank friends were new to Scottish highland events so it was refreshing to see it again through new eyes as they enjoyed the wonders of all the competitions, from band, drum major, dance and athletics along with all the entertainment throughout the days. They enjoyed the food and the kids' area when their grandkids came to visit too. Andrew and I had a great time reconnecting with Jennifer after so many years. It is nice to include Tucson again to our games route.



Jennifer and Zia Blair, Tucson



Tucson Tent

Arizona's next games will be the 53rd Annual Phoenix Scottish Games, March 4-5th, 2017 in Phoenix at Indian Steele Park. The date has moved up and more events are in the planning stage. We usually set up 2 or more tents

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ARIZONA COMMISSIONER REPORT
Helen Blair with co-commissioner Andrew Blair
Cupp
 azclanblair@gmail.com

November 4-6th was the 30th Tucson Celtic Festival and Scottish Highland Games. It was held at Rillito Race track and the site has changed since the last time we were there, all for the better. The setup, events and parking was easier for all the clan, vendors and groups. Andrew and I were joined by friends Robert and Devin Brookbank who helped us set up and pack up. CBS former Librarian Jennifer Blair and her daughter Zia

for these games. As plans are formalized their website will be updated. They also have lower admission tickets if bought in advance. www.arizonascots.com

St. Andrews dinner and dance will be December 3rd, 2016 at the Phoenix Country Club. Info available through www.arizonascots.com

January 21st, 2017 will be a Robbie Burns Dinner at the Dubliner Pub in Phoenix. www.fuilceltic.com

I hope everyone will support their Scottish society events- Helen Blair

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CLAN STORE FROM HELEN BLAIR

There was very little business for the store this last year. There were only 4 sales.

I've been waiting for my place to sell before reordering any supplies. I have tried to reach the man who embroidered the military shirts without success.

I'm not able to send a complete breakdown on items in the store because my computer crashed in December after I packed up my office that had all my back up disks. My place still hasn't sold so all my office is still in storage along with most of my household items. I don't know when I'll have access to it.

I have kept a certain amount of store items at my house while the rest is packed in storage. I've closed on the new place in May. Andy is living there while I live in my Mesa home until it sells.

- Helen

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Did you hear about the Scottish Santa who, when he came down the chimney, asked "Anyone want to buy some toys?"

WHIT YOUNG'S AMAZING DIORAMA; BATTLE OF STERLING – Presented in Estes Park, Colorado, September, 2016



Estes Park, CO, 9-2016

L to R: Whit Young, Brigham Lawyer as William Wallace, Nick Lawyer as Robert the Bruce, Melissa Lawyer as Queen Elizabeth de Burgh, Will Young as Andrew de Moray.

Whit Young presents in a way that makes his audience feel they are there at the battles of old. It is quite an experience to watch these presentations. Whit's grandchildren and children participate and march in the parade with us. This year, the grandchildren played various important historical characters including Robert the Bruce, Andrew Moray, William Wallace, and Queen

Watch this amazing presentation on the CBS website at: www.clanblair.org.

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DANCING!!!!



The Celtic Steps Dancers, Denver, CO, 1st place!

On November 18 through the 22nd, the Irish Dancing regional context was held in San Francisco, California, called the Western Region Oireachtas. Irish Dancer Saoirse Alys Blair Galligan, granddaughter of president Jim Blair, competed with her group and they won 1st place in their figure choreography, 2nd place in their mixed 8-hand, and 6th place out of thirty teams in her girls 8-hand.



Celebrating: Saoirse and her brother, Tiernan

Please send Highland or Irish dancing news from your family. We'd love to share it!

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SCOTTISH MYSTERY

Alan Boyle



A small cottage in the Edinburgh suburb of Gilmerton hides the entrance to an unusual mystery. Buried in the sandstone underneath the town's homes are a series of tunnels known as Gilmerton Cove. They are obviously

man-made—on top of the building—there are benches, seats, and stairs carved from the stone—yet no one has any real idea who built them, when, or why.

A popular explanation, first recorded in 1769, is that the tunnel system was carved by a blacksmith named George Paterson between 1719 and 1724.

Another possibility is that it was dug in the 17th century as a “trial bore” to search for coal. There are some tunnels heading north that are blocked but may once have reached the nearby Craigmillar Castle, suggesting that the cove could have been an escape tunnel. Some of the wilder suggestions include the idea that it was used as a hideaway by witches facing persecution.

An archaeological investigation was carried out between 2000 and 2002 to determine once and for all what purpose the tunnels served. Sadly, its only conclusion is that the cove had been so widely used over the last few centuries that any chance of figuring out its origins are long gone.

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LIFE IN A SCOTTISH CASTLE **(From Educational Scotland, Foghlan Alba)**

Today most of Scotland’s castles are dramatic ruins... Every castle has stories to tell.



Caerlaverock Castle, Scotland

Through the medieval age Scotland’s castles evolved from defensive timber towers with wooden palisades to massive stone fortresses and tower houses. Eventually the Scots built more comfortable and lavish castles, importing ideas from French chateaux.

Castle kitchens bustled as cooks and servants prepared food for the lord’s or lady’s table. Boar and venison were roasted on spits in massive open fireplaces. Dough was kneaded and bread was baked in huge ovens. Boys brought wood from the stores to keep the cooking fires lit. Food was seasoned with herbs and spices, and sweetened with honey. Sometimes wine was imported from France but usually everyone drank ale.

Grooms tended the horses while stable lads mucked out the laid fresh hay and fetched and carried water and feed. Huntsmen brought back deer, hares, rabbits and birds for the table. Popular pastimes included hunting and hawking, and embroidery and weaving. Medieval musicians and singers entertained the household. Colourful tapestries hung from the walls and candles lit the castle at night.



Life in a castle was better than life as a peasant but it was often very smelly. Dogs wandered about the castle halls eating scraps from the table, and the toilets - called ‘garderobes’ - were open holes that led to cesspits or emptied outside the castle walls.

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November 2016

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