



# 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](http://www.clanblair.org)

Fourth Quarter Novembert 2018

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Fellow Scots

Fall is a wonderful time for Scottish events and activities celebrating our heritage. Summer was extremely busy with festivals and many continue into the fall time period. I hope you participated in an event near your home. Many events are reported in this Bruidhinn. Enjoy being a Blair and a Scot!

With Thanksgiving past, we look forward to the holiday season and the New Year including Hogmanay. It is a wonderful time to reflect on life and family and Adoree and I send very best wishes to you and your family.

We send congratulations to 14-year-old William Diman who is this year's recipient of the William C. Blair Youth Award. William is a Scottish athletic champion and scholar from North Carolina. Please find an interview with William in the Bruidhinn.

Members should start thinking about nominations for this award in early 2019.

CBS held the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 14 via a webinar. We have found that more members attend this digital version than when we ask members to travel large distances. This year's AGM included the annual business report, an introduction to the new website and a spectacular presentation on Blair House including an interview/tour with the last Blair owner Lina Borwick. Dyani Blair Galligan and her children were privileged to stay in the Blair Carriage House which is now a bed and breakfast. You should all make the trip and see the only castle in Scotland occupied for more than 900 years by one family. I invite you to watch the recorded version of the AGM and interview/tour by visiting the new website at [www.clanblair.org/members](http://www.clanblair.org/members).

As you watch the interview, please be reminded that a CD/video of Blair House is available for purchase on the CBS Store site. It sells for \$20 and proceeds go directly to a non-profit established by the Borwick family, the name of which is the Ray of Hope's mission focused on "reducing poverty through education that is sustainable" in Uganda. Please enjoy. It is a Great Day to be a Scot - Sláinte! Jim Blair [president@clanblair.org](mailto:president@clanblair.org)

**WILLIAM CAMPBELL BLAIR  
YOUTH AWARD WINNER, 2018**

**William Diman, North Carolina**



William Blair Diman is the grandson of member Charles Diman of North Carolina. He won the award based on his abilities for Scottish wrestling, as well as his everyday ongoing athletic prowess while holding down top scholarship honors.

William turned 14 in October. He has been attending Scotfests for about 4 years with his grandfather and family. He said, "I was very happy you decided to choose me in this competition." He first got involved in the Scottish wrestling when he attended the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in North Carolina in 2013. He said he was drawn to the wrestling, and watched it for quite a while, then found out he could enter the games. He entered and actually won first place! He was able to hold onto the First Place Plate for that year, then won 2<sup>nd</sup> place the following year. He loves going to the Fests and wrestling. His other Scottish awards are: First place in The Kilted Mile

in Loch Norman in 2011, and 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Grandfather Mountain Kilted Mile in 2012.

William participates in sports all year long. He is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade in Providence Day School. He plays soccer and football in the Fall and in the Spring, he participates in track and field. In addition to that, he has mostly A+ grades. He will be able to attend Providence Day School through High School. In wrestling, he is in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade weight class, so he hopes to be able to bring more points to his team this season.

William's athletic awards in his school sports are: 800m and 1600m, best in 2018; Wrestling: Record, 17 of 19, (15 by pin), 3<sup>rd</sup> place in League Championship, (2017-2018); and Soccer age 4-12, League Champion last 5 years. William returned to soccer this fall after a year of football.

William's parents are Andrew and Laurie Diman. William's sister, Elizabeth, is 11 and the family calls her Betsy. William says Betsy is "a good sister." When we spoke, Elizabeth was spending a lot of time working in the school play, The Wizard of Oz.

Most years, the Diman family vacations together on Bellwood Island, an island off the coast of North Carolina. They surf, have beach time (where the children build huge sand holes). But sometimes the ocean is too rough, so they spend a lot of time golfing also. In the winter and spring, they like to go to Colorado and Montana to ski. Besides golf and the other sports already mentioned, William also likes to play tennis.

William says he loves doing Scottish things with his grandfather, but he wishes he had more time to participate more.

When asked his life philosophy for living, he said “I believe that you shouldn’t bring prejudice into life and you should accept people for who they are.”

Congratulations to this fine young man!

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**NEWS FROM NEW YORK**

**Lynn Gallaudet Dolan, Long Island  
Commissioner**

Hello from Bellerose Manor, NY!

Wasn’t sure if I was going to make the Scottish Games this year at Westbury Gardens. My husband Jay has been dealing with AFib and to top it off his appendix burst so he was in the hospital. He had to go back in September to have the appendix removed. Jay was still in the hospital when it came time for the games but he told me to go. He had an ulterior motive, for me to go. He needed a new sporrán for his kilt. He is a member of the Clan Graham. My son, John, got the day off to help me at the tent.

So, this year I attended the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Long Island Scottish Festival and Highland Games here on Long Island NY. The Games were held on August 25<sup>th</sup> and the weather was sunny and beautiful. It was not as hot as it had been here on Long Island. I love when the opening ceremonies start because when the National Anthem is played and everyone stops and stands quietly with their hands over their hearts. The day was filled with games and entertainment. They had a Cultural Tent again this year. I guess it will be an ongoing thing. At the cultural tent you could learn an introduction to the bagpipes, and watch a kilt making demonstration. The author of “GREAT SCOTS,” Jason M. Fonseca, was in the tent. Also offered were

Gaelic lessons and yes, learning Highland dancing. This year there was a “Children’s Tent” where the kids could see a juggler, hear stories, and see a puppet show.

There was piping and drumming all through the day. There were many smells of the Scottish foods cooking. There were the tents that sell Scottish goods. I personally go to The Union Jack to get my Scottish Blend tea and a few other goodies. I bought my Steak and Ale pies , and also the meat pies from Cameron’s.

More people stopped by the tent. There are not many Blairs on Long Island. My cousins are one Blair family and then there are those who stop by because they know Blairs. And of course, friends come by and say Hello and sit a spell. One of these days I will wear my Civil War tartan skirt.

So long for now!

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**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
COMMISSIONERS REPORT**

**November 9, 2018**

**Russ and Elena McCrary, No. California  
Commissioners**

As the season for highland games here in Northern California comes to a close, we wish to thank all our Clan Blair members and new members for another great year. After all the devastating fires that plagued California this year we hope and pray that all are safe in their homes for this holiday season.

The 153<sup>rd</sup> Annual Scottish Gathering and Games in Pleasanton, CA, held Labor Day weekend, was again our last and biggest event of the year. Since 1866, the San Francisco Caledonian Club has brought

these games to the Bay Area. Clan members were entertained by 35 U.S. and Canadian pipe bands, drum majors, and heavy event athletes. With the Western U.S. Highland Dance Championships being held, clan members were able to watch Erin Blair show her grace and style while competing in the 16 and older categories. In the Championship/Premiership results Erin was overall winner and as she has been world champion many times, we wish her well in all her future endeavors.

For those who have attended the Pleasanton games, the clan village was moved from its previous location which was between the Grandstands and Athletic/Soccer field to what is called the Walnut Grove. Changes are not welcomed by all and this move is no different. As everything new deserves a chance, we set up the clan tents on Friday and waited to see what the weekend would bring. For starters, it was cooler weather compared to last year with 90 degrees being the high temperature compared to 114 degrees last year. We were blessed with all the clan members who stopped by the tents. For the new members who signed up at this and all the events this year we thank you and hope you will be members for many years to come.

There are always a few late year events that we have included and with the year coming to a close, Elena and I wish to again thank you for all your support. With Veterans Day this weekend, we have included pictures in honor of our fathers who are and always will be our heroes.



Elena and Russ Mc Crary at Veterans Memorial in Castro Valley, CA., standing next to Navy Monument is in honor of Russ'es father DuWayne McCrary who served in the Navy during the Korean War

Candle Light Christmas Walk

<http://www.motherlodescots.com/index.php>

Kirkin' o' th' Tartan

Daughters of Scotia, Lodge #203

<https://saintandrewssocietyofsacramento.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/2018%20Kirkin%20Flyer.pdf>



Manuel Sotelo holding a picture from his Army days in World War II . Manny also served in the Air Force during the Korean War

## **ANOTHER SCOTTISH HOLIDAY TRADITION – STONEHAVEN, SCOTLAND: FIREBALL SWINGING**

(From Hogamanay.com)

The ancient Stonehaven Fireball ceremony starts at 11 p.m. on December 31<sup>st</sup> each year, with crowds beginning to gather from 10.30pm.

### **Stonehaven Fireball swingers at midnight**

The ceremony is an ancient one. It occurs in Stonehaven, a Scottish fishing village south of Aberdeen. It is one of the most unique Hogmanay festivals in Scotland. At the strike of midnight, High street is lit up as around fifty to sixty local fireball-swingers. They go through town swinging their fireballs above their heads.

While it looks dangerous, the fireballs are packed in wire cages and attached to strong wire ropes, five feet long.

### **What's a fireball made of?**

The ingredients of a fireball are combustible and oily waste matter (rags, twigs, cones, bits of coal) soaked in paraffin and held together in a case of wire mesh.



The weight of the ball depends on how much each swinger feels he or she can control. They are usually 5 to 15 lbs. They last for about 20 minutes at the most, and in the past, some were 3 feet in diameter, lasting for about 2 hours.

### **The parade**

Over 40 swingers, all of whom must reside in the Burgh, march down the High street to the accompaniment of pipes and drums from the Mercat Cross to the Police Station, swinging the flaming balls around their heads. After the fireballers have gone through the town, they go to the sea where they throw the fireballs into the water.

Not surprisingly, fireball-swinging is an energetic activity. As one regular participant records: "I can personally attest to the effort needed to continue swinging for the 10-15 minutes the ball will burn."

The tourists who come to see this sight are many, often doubling the size of the town's inhabitants.

### **Origins**

The ceremony dates from a fishermen's festival in the 19th century. The fire-burning marchers actually were around before Christianity. There are theories about what the celebration was about that long ago, including::

1. That it coincides with the winter solstice and the fireballs swinging relate to the sun.
2. A pre-Christian theory that the fireballs purify the world by consuming evil and warding off witches and evil spirits.
3. That sometime in the Dark Ages, a shooting star appeared above what is now Stonehaven. Thereafter, by coincidence, the living nearby may have had bumper crops. The seers of the tribe then attributed this

prosperity to the coming of the shooting star. The Fireball is a mimic of the coming of the shooting star and prosperity.

**Safety**

These days the celebration has become such a popular event that, in the interests of safety, barriers are erected to separate the swingers and pipe bands, and control the thousands that come to spectate. But the spectacle and atmosphere are still second to none.



Photo of Scotland's meteor on 3-1-2016

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**COLORADO REPORT**

In September, the Blairs gathered at our yearly fest in Estes Park, Colorado, to celebrate our heritage with other Scots. We enjoyed Celtic games, music, dancing and sharing our Clan with other attendees who visited our clan tent. Member Kip Baker kept us beautifully fed. The photo above was taken after we finished marching in the parade. Pictured, from let to right, front row: Saoirse Blair Galligan, Arabella Blair,

Tiernan Blair Galligan, Atia Rose Blair. 2<sup>nd</sup> row: Dyani Blair Galligan, Elisa Blair, Quinnlin Blair, Adoree Blair, Leslie Blair Gallagher, Sheryl Carr, Janet McLaughlin, Kay Wetteman. Last row, Torin Blair, Jim Blair and Kip Baker.

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## UTAH REPORT

### Whit Young, Utah Commissioner

Whit attended the Salt Lake games in June and the Payson games in July. Tom and Dave Blair were his main supports. He often has hello from Mike Lawyer and grandson Nick Lawyer, who also plays drums in the Wasatch District Pipe Band.

Pat Gilmore was able to trace his Blair lineage and shared that with Whit. He discovered that he and Whit share the same lineage through Seth Millington Blair and through Robert Blair and Robert's parents David Blair and Rachel Boyd Blair. Maybe some readers have the same ancestors?

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## A VISIT TO BLAIR HOUSE

### Dyani Blair Galligan



The Blair house is located about two miles southeast of Dalry in Northern Ayrshire

As you probably remember, the Blair House was home to Blairs for centuries. The latest owners, Luke and Lina Borwick, found that they had to sell the home, as the upkeep was too expensive in today's world. However, Luke and Lina are devoted to the history and the house, and maintain a Bed and Breakfast for tourists on the grounds, as well as amemorial to Cecily Blair (the last Blair of that name to own the home) which is built on the parklands of the Blair Estate



Lina Borwick

approximately 30 kilometers (20 miles) southwest of Glasgow. Blair House is the only home of its kind that has had the same family living in it for 900 years: 1110-2012.

This year, Dyani Blair Galligan and her two children, Saoirse and Tiernan, had the opportunity to visit and stay at the Blair House estate while Saoirse was attending an Irish Dance competition. While there, they met with Lina Borwick, who was generous with her time and knowledge of the history of this lovely home and its grounds. Dyani presented on Blair House during the AGM online, and some of her highlights are printed here.

The original keep of Blair house was built in the 1100s and it remains, incorporated into

the current house. The keep's walls are still visible in the modern home – which is very rare.

Jean Francois became the first Blair when the Barony of Blair was bestowed on him in the 1100's. He built out the Eastern end of the home from the keep towers.

In 1666, Sir William Blair married a very sophisticated European woman, Lady Margaret Hamilton. She brought wealth to the marriage. William Blair and Lady Margaret built out the large southern wing of the home. It became a mansion of sophistication, rather than a castle-like structure.

When Scotland was divided into loyalties between the Catholics and Protestants, Sir William and Lady Margaret chose different sides, and while Sir William went to battle for the Protestants, Lady Margaret laid a curse on him. Sir William died in prison, and his son and grandson died over the next 20 years, leaving no male heir to carry on as the Baron of Blair.

Magdalene, the granddaughter of Lady Margaret and Sir William, was married to William Scott, who assumed Blair as his surname. Their son married and started a new Blair lineage. They added a small east wing to the home. In 1732, their son Hamilton Blair inherited the estate.

In the 1800's, the home and especially its grounds, were massively overhauled. New roads were built. The huge Wellingtonia trees on the estate were planted by William Blair in the 1800's, and they still stand today.

William Fordyce Blair, a 'legal' pirate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1800's, brought more wealth to the estate. He built out the Northwest wing, and completely overhauled the East wing for his children, adding a top floor.

Luke and Lina Borwick spent a decade caring for the parklands at Blair House, where rhododendrons, hedges and wooded pathways flourished. They created private nooks around the gardens, the pool and the burn.

Cecily Blair was the last of the Blairs of Blair to live in the Blair house.



Cecily Blair

Dyani said that being there 'felt like home.' She urges other Blairs to "Do it! It is a trip you will never regret. The history surrounds you like the night sky. You feel steeped in the stories of our ancestors!"

Dyani also says: "The Blair family owes a significant debt of gratitude to Luke and Lina Borwick. They shouldered an enormous burden making the decision about Blair House, in addition to the upkeep and cataloguing after the house and lands came

into their possession, and the preservation of as much history as possible before the house moved into new hands. Buy the DVD – you will see what I mean!” (see page one)

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE BORWICKS:**

The Borwicks are very giving and have dedicated themselves not only to the preservation of Blair History, but also to an organization called “Ray of Hope,” dedicated to reduce poverty through ‘education that is sustainable’ in Uganda. The principle office for this effort is at the Carriage House on the Blair Estate. The school in Uganda services 50 orphaned or impoverished children each year. The global Blair family can help!

You can donate for this important mission at: <https://friendsofsschooluganda.org>

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FOR COPIES OF THE DVD OF BLAIR HOUSE BY LINA BORWICK, contact Jim Blair at the clan store:

[President@clanblair.org](mailto:President@clanblair.org)

Or order online at <https://clanblair.net/cbsmembers/shop>



Children of the Ray of Hope

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# THE BLAIRS OF BALTHAYOCK

(From “The Blairs of  
Balthayock and Their Cadets,  
1150-1850 by Jack Blair)

Stephen de Blair (1150c-1210c)



The earliest association of the surname Blair around Taysoide is discovered in the records of the Cistercian Abbey of Coupar Angus.

During the reign of King William (1165-1214) and sometime before 1201, Stephen de Blair, son of Vallenus, granted to the monks of Coupar a charter for the lands of Lethcassy to which William added a royal charter of Confirmation. The gift was made for the salvation of the souls of the Kings David, Malcolm and William and for Stephen's father, mother, sisters and all his kinfolk.

Stephen de Blair, his father's only son, was a witness to other gifts to the monks and other nobles in his lifetime.

Today, it can be seen that the lands mentioned in the gifts de Blair witnessed are



RED BOX = THE LOCATION OF THIS ARTICLE

those of Ardblair, Pittenriech and Lethendy, all of which were long held by Blair families. Blacklunans were in the possession of the senior Blair family. This barony lies twelve miles north of Blairgowrie at the foot of Mount Blair. We do not know when it came into Blair hands.

## Alexander de Blair

Alexander lived during the reign of William the Lion and Alexander II. He married Ela, daughter of Hugh de Nyden. Together they were granted a charter of the lands of Konakin in Fife, in 1203 to 1230. Alexander also gained part of Nyden lands which remained many years in the family's possession.

The senior Blair family held Blathyock near Errol for many centuries. Landcarsie,

mentioned in the gift, is the site of the present day Carsie.

Alexander may have been son of Stephen de Blair but there is no definitive proof. Alexander was succeeded by William de Blair, thought to be his son.

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**JOHN KNOX AND SCOTLAND  
(and Scotland Education)  
From “How the Scots Invented the  
Modern World” by Arthur Herman**

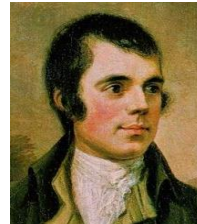
“Above all, John Knox wanted to turn the Scots into God’s chosen people, and Scotland into the New Jerusalem.”

The Scottish Reformation was the achievement of one man of heroic will and tireless energy, John Knox. Uncompromising, dogmatic and driven, Knox was a prolific writer and a preacher of truly terrifying power. He had spent his early years in exile, prison, and even penal servitude of being on a rowing bench in the king’s galleys. But those tough trials toughened him physically and spiritually. Beginning in 1559, “John Knox single-handedly inspired, intimidated, and bullied Scotland’s nobility and urban classes into overthrowing the Catholic Church of their forebears and adoption the religious creed of Geneva’s John Calvin...he taught a generation of Scotsmen to believe the same thing themselves.”

By February, 1560, most of Scotland signed a national charter that tied the religion to the politics and democracy of the nation. By May, only some people in the Highlands had

not signed. A great deal of political upheaval followed, in the battle to bring Scotland to national unity on religion. Local parishes became the social center of Scotland’s people, as well as the leaders of political thought.

There was a great deal of resistance, but one of the positives of the whole reformation was the growth of education in Scotland, affecting even the poorest farmers, such as Robert Burns’ family. Scotland thus became the world’s first literate society.



From Plow to Pen:  
Robert Burns

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"Oh no, I've got my bagpipes in the oven!"



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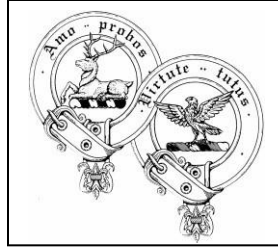
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