



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

Third Quarter September 2013

President’s Message



Fellow Scots – What a great summer! Clan members attended 24 games and 10 activities across 10 states. We hosted Clan Blair Society tents, marched in parades, participated in Ceilidhs, and celebrated the Blair heritage. More than 30 members participated and welcomed dozens more to join CBS. We welcome new members to our family.

CBS held its first Annual General Meeting via the internet. On September 21, 30 families joined together on a WebEx conference to share stories about Blair ancestors, Scottish Attire, Genealogy and DNA and review the business affairs of CBS.

The Cyber-AGM was recorded and is available to members on the Member section of the www.clanblair.org website. If you missed the Cyber-AGM please contact the website and participate in this important 2 hour session.

We will be surveying members to gather their feedback and recommendations for 2014.

Our plan is to host more Cyber-meetings in order to share the activities of CBS members and to provide members education and discussion about issues or history they find of interest. Please share your ideas with us. president@clanblair.org.

In this issue of the quarterly newsletter, you will see reports on activities in many of our state Clans. You will see the report of the Annual Board Meeting held on August 31, 2013,

an update on membership renewal and recruitment, memorials of Clan members and other family activities.

I hope that you agree - it is a Great time to be a Scot!

Cyber – AGM Sept. 21, 2013

The Clan Blair Society held the first-ever Annual General Meeting (AGM) via WebEx. Members joined via video from their computers and audio from telephone connections. The 2 hour session included presentations:

- The Battle of Bannockburn – Whit Young
- The Siege of Derry – Shawn Blair
- The Story of Sam Blair – Coy Blair
- Scottish Attire – Leslie Blair Gallagher
- Blair Genealogy and DNA – Coy Blair
- Annual Board Meeting Report – Jim Blair

All presentations were well done – Huzzah!

The early feedback from participants is quite positive – one stating, “he likely would never be able to attend an AGM personally”. This alternative was a great start.

The CBS board appreciates all the support and participation from members. The AGM was recorded and will be available on the www.clanblair.org website – Member section in about 2 weeks.

Thank you to presenters and members for your participation in this wonderful event. I hope we can host virtual events like this 2-3 times per year.

Look forward to our Survey Monkey survey to gather your feedback and comments about the Cyber-AGM.

Forward your questions and thoughts to Jim Blair at president@clanblair.org or Shawn Blair at Weblaird@clanblair.org.

Annual Business Meeting - CBS Board of Directors - August 31, 2013

Board Members present were:

- Jim Blair – Pres. - Colorado
- Shawn Blair – VP & Webmaster - Maine
- Frances Holt – Sec. - California
- Ann Fredline – Treas. – Idaho
- Helen Blair – Store & Past Pres. - AZ
- Jennifer Blair – Library – AZ

President Jim Blair called the meeting to order at 9 am MDT. All standing committee reports are as follows:

All Committees operating well

- Treasury – 2012 Net Income - \$1,426
Balance Sheet 2012 - \$18,324
- Clan Store – Net Income \$410, with all outstanding debts paid
- Library – 19 books and folders available from the Odom Library in Atlanta, GA
(These items are available for check-out – see Clan Blair website for instructions)

- High Commissioner Report – 10 of 18 State Commissioners reported
24 games attended, along with 10 activities held
Activities included Burn's Suppers, parades attended, and other festivals attended

- Membership Report – 213 members as of June 2013. This is a reduction of 42 from 2012. Several non-renewals are the result of

deaths and the balance is for nonpayment. Jim Blair and Charlie Diman will make follow-up calls to seek renewals.

- Webmaster Report – The CBS website received 12,400 visits during the past 12 months, including 9,660 views with 996 from the UK. Conversion to a new website design is underway. The Webmaster needs assistance in updating pages and designing the new web-engine.

Old Business:

- Renewal of annual support to Battle of Bannockburn – Approved \$100
- Membership renewal a continuing issue
- Webmaster help needed – coding and page updates

New Business:

- Nominating Committee confirmed – Kurt Blair – Chair, Leslie Blair Gallagher and Pat Risdon
- High Commissioner needed – recruiting underway
- Invitation to be made to the new owners of Blair House and Blairquahn in Scotland to become honorary members

Arizona Report Helen Blair, Commissioner

Games where CBS hosted a tent were:

- Sept 2012- Sedona Celtic Harvest Festival
- March 2013- Phoenix Highland Games
- May 2013- Prescott Highland Games
- July 2013- Flagstaff Highland Games
- *April 2013 Payson Festival event was cancelled

Game/tent visitors:

- 2012 Sedona festival- 1 member & friend
- 2013 Phoenix Games- 7 members with families & 20 other families
- 2013 Prescott Games- 2 members & 5 visitors
- 2013 Flagstaff Games- 3 members & 7 visitors

Greater Greenville Scottish Games & Highland Festival

**Wyomia Blair and Dale Granger
Commissioners**

May 24th & 25th

A Joint Military Salute To The American & Scottish Military

On Friday night the 24th, the Great Scot Parade and the Ceilidh was held in downtown Greenville. In the afternoon, we went to Furman University and put up our flags and banner.

Friday night the Clan Reception was held at the Greenville Hilton. Wyomia, Dot, and Dale attended. There was plenty of good food and drinks. The ceremonies began with the presentation of the colors, then the presentation of the Haggis. The Honored Guest and Chief of the Games, Andrew MacThomas, The MacThomas of Finegand, F.S.A. Scotland., 19th Chief the Clan MacThomas, gave a speech. Clan MacThomas was the Honored Clan of the Games. There was also a speech from Malcolm Ian Sinclair, The Earl of Caithness. He is Chief Emeritus of the Games. Everybody had a good time.

The Distinguished Guests were Robin Naysmith, Scottish Government Counselor, and North America since Nov. 2007. As Counselor, Robin is Scotland's most senior Diplomatic representative in North America. Based at the British Embassy in Washington, DC, he is head of the Scottish Affairs Office. Present also was Professor David W. Purdie MD, FRCP, Edinburgh. FSA Scotland Fellow, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. Fellow, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

Military Guests were Honorary Chairman, Lt. Colonel Tim Sellers, in charge of the SC Army National Guard 228th Tactical Theatre Signal Corps Brigade. Major General Robert E. Livingston, Jr., the Adjutant General, South Carolina, and Lt. Colonel Mike Sturkie, Deputy

Commander for the South Carolina Guard's Medical Command, along with 2 SCOTS Battalion of the Royal Highland Fusiliers.

On Saturday, we arrived at 6:30 to set up. The Games opened at 8:30 am. There were 42 Clans and Societies present this year. The Heavy Athletic events started on the main field at 8 am. The opening ceremonies were at 11:00, and included the Color Guard, The Chief of the Games, The Chief of Clan MacThomas and his wife. They were followed by the Military Guests, then the 2d Div. Marine Corps Band, then members of the South Carolina Army National Guard's 228th TTSB and 151st ESB. Following these people were the 263rd Army Air and Missile Defense Command and members of the 2 SCOTS Battalion of the Royal Highland Fusiliers, then the Massed Bands, and the Parade of Tartans. We had 10 Bands this year.

Our tent was in a different place this year; closer to the vendors. We had several people stop by, talk, and say how good our tent looked. We had only two Blairs stop by: Todd M. Blair from Florida, and Calvin Yates from Columbia, SC. Mr. Yates' mother's maiden name is Blair.

The Great Scot British Car Show was at the festival, along with the EUSPBA Pipe & Drum Competition for Grade 3,4 and 5 and a Drum Major Competition. There was a Border Collie Invitational, a Highland Dancing Competition, and the Heavy Athletic Competition. The entertainment tent had music all day.

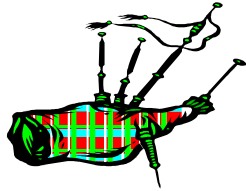
There were demonstrations in Longbow, Axe Throwing, Scottish Country Dancing, Scottish Spinning and Weaving, Celtic Harpist, Scottish Fiddlers, and Weaponry Re-enactors. Children at the festival enjoyed the Wee Scotland area for children.

There was a living history encampment area with two Scottish military re-enactor units of the 1750s.

The closing ceremonies were at 5:00 pm.

There was a Celtic Jam concert with Albannach, Rathkeltair, Seven Handle Circus and Cleghorn from 6:30 until 10 pm.

Your Aye's



North Carolina Report 2013
Charlie Diman, Commissioner

North Carolina 2013 Membership - Eleven Families, three new this year

(Total includes three lifetime members)

Games Attended: Three

- 1- Latta Plantation Celtic Festival on St Patrick's Day (Inaugural event)
- 2- Loch Norman Scottish Games / Rural Hill Scottish Festival
- 3- Grandfather Mountain Highland Games

We took first place in the "Young Boys Wrestling" for the third year running; William Diman in 2013, Parker Stephens in 2012 and Conor Stephens in 2011.

The youth running events scheduled for Sunday were cancelled when the rains came.

Colorado Report
Kurt M. Blair Co-Commissioner

The Colorado Clan Blair Society has enjoyed a very exciting summer. CBS participated in the Colorado Highlands Games and Festival in Highlands Ranch, CO in August where a dozen members welcomed a number of visitors and



Kurt Blair, CO Co-Commissioner

new members to our tent. This festival is a wide-open event held in the heart of Suburban Denver and attracts visitors from the entire metro and front-range area. We have expanded our tent to a "double wide".

We also celebrated Clan Blair Society at the Longs Peak Scottish Festival at Estes Park, CO in September. CBS marched in the Grand Parade, with the best-looking banner carriers on the planet.



L-R – Saoirse Blair Galligan, Atia Blair, Arabella Blair, Cordylia Blair Shryack, Tiernan Blair Galligan, Quinlinn Blair and Quaintance Blair in the background

We welcomed about 20 Blairs to our tent and a dozen visitors (3 new members). All parties enjoyed great food and drink, athletic games, music and medieval games. You can see from our picture that all who attended had a great time.



L-R Front: Arabella Blair, Cordylia Blair Shryack, Saoirse Blair Galligan, Quinlinn Blair – 2nd row: Adoree Blair, Erynn Blair Shryack, Quaintance Blair, Atia Blair (on shoulders), Molly Tyler – 3rd row: Mike Galligan, Jim Blair, Nike Shryack with Lochlann, Kip Baker, Torin Blair, Leslie Blair Gallagher, Allen Tyler.

While in Estes Park, the group attended the Kirk'n O' the Tartan. The ceremony was very special including the raising of Clan Tartans;



Fall events include whisky tasting and socialization among members. We will celebrate Robbie Burns in Jan-Feb.



Wee Lochlann Quarterly Report



Lochlann Blair Shryack with Blair Atholl Single Malt

Blairsville, GA Scottish Festival & Highland Games Wyomia Blair & Dale Granger Commissioners

The Blairsville Games were held June 6, 7 & 8 at Meeks Park in Blairsville. On Friday, there had a Kilted golf tournament. The regular Games were on Fri. and Sat.

We (Wyomia, Dot, and Dale) arrived on Fri. afternoon. Our tent this year was along the stream in the shade, as were all the tents, spread out about a 100 yards. Again, this year they had 35 Clans and Societies. We put up the frame for the flags and banner and put up the flags. It was hot but there was a good breeze blowing.

On Friday night they had the Ceilidh with beautiful pageantry, a wonderful meal, and great entertainment.

On Saturday morning, we arrived about 7 am to finish setting up, and the gates opened at 8 am. Member Frank Blair from Rome GA. joined us. He spent the day with us as he usually does, helping us greet people and tell them about Clan Blair. Roger Blair from Signal Mountain, TN, also spent the day with us. We had first met him in Greenville about

four years ago. He is a good friend and a fine person. We all had a good time. The Kilted mile race was at 10. Mini Coopers paraded thru the park. The Athletic events started at 9 am on the main field.

At the Opening Ceremony, spectators enjoyed the Massed Bands, and Parade of Tartans. The Scottish-American Military Society Color Guard, followed by the five Massed Bands, led the Parade. The Honored Clan was Clan Henderson, who led the other Clans. As this is a small field, Dale was able to walk with Frank to represent Clan Blair. After the parade, the Athletic events continued on the main field until 4 pm.

There was a Falconry Demonstration, and a Clan Tug of War contest. On other fields, there were Gordon Setters and Border Collie Demonstrations, and Fiddle and Bagpipe workshops. Dancers competed at the dance pavilion. At the entertainment tent, there were bands playing as well as individual performers, such as Colin Grant-Adams. Children enjoyed the various activities at the Children's Field. At 4, the Massed Bands again played, and the games closed at 5 p.m.

We had many people who came by and said we had a great tent with lots of information. There were bigger crowds at the festival than we had seen before. These people signed in: Frank and Roger Blair, Jackson Guest from Watkinville, GA, who is a cousin (descendant of Mary Blair, daughter of Cobert Blair 1st). Also signing in were Laura Mills, Morganton, GA, another relative, Dot Roseanne Blair, Alpharetta, GA and C. Fred Sanford, Statesville NC, a member of BSGR.

On Sat. Jim McAfee, the Chairman of the Organizing Committee who has always been a good friend, came by the tent and visited for a while. His Administrative Assistant Judy Senevey came by and visited with us. They always tell us it would not be the same to have the Games without the Blairs being there. The Rev. Travis Blair, Adams Games Chaplain, came by and visited for a while. We talked about our Blair families. He always wears his

Blair Tartan Kilt.

On Sunday, we arrived at 7:30 and the gates opened at 8 am. At 9am, we went to the church service with the Kirkin' O' The Tartan. The Rev. Travis Blair Adams officiated. Part of the service was delivered in the Old Braid Scots dialect. Dale carried in the Clan Blair Tartan Flag. During the Kirkin', he presented our Tartan Flag as our Clan and Tartan were blessed. After the service, we went back to the tent and all the events and activities continued. The Bonniest and Boniest Knee contest was fun, as were the Women's Haggis Hurl contests. It was a good day until about 4:00 when a rainstorm moved in, and we had to pack up in a hurry.

Your Aye's

Report from Utah Whit Young, Commissioner

The Annual Scottish Festival and Highland Games were held on July 7 and 8, 2013, at Thanksgiving Point, Lehi, Utah. This location is about 3 miles south of the Salt Lake County line on I-15.

We sent up our tent in #55 spot, which was on the main street of the Scottish booths right next to Clan Campbell. It was across the field from the bands' field, and the Root Beer stand, which was a good spot! We set up Friday afternoon and cleaned up after 6:00 PM on Saturday. We have submitted a picture of the tent and crew to the Newsletter.

Our team consisted of Tom Blair, myself, Douglas Blair Young, Robert Steven Young, Nickolas Blair Lawyer, Jeanne Blair.

Our activities consisted of 'manning the booth', talking about the Blairs, answering questions and marching in the Parade of the Clans while Jeanne watched the booth.

We attendance had seven people sign

our visitors list. There was a large crowd at the games, probably the best I have seen. It was hot!

August 13 & 14, 2013 were the dates of the Payson Highland Games, Payson, Utah is some 30 miles south of Provo along I-15.

We were given our usual spot a short distance from the vendor booths and the open-air stage. As usual, we set up the tent Friday afternoon. We had the same team as in Lehi with the exception of my grandson Nick and Jeanne Blair. I was not able to be there Saturday as my brothers and I with our wives were at a funeral in Red Rock, Colorado for my niece. Tom Blair and his family 'manned the booth' and marched in the parade in our absence. We got two names. Tom thinks it was a success and they had a good turnout. The parade is held in the city park at Payson.

I took my brothers and their wives (plus my wife) to dinner to thank them for their help

Projects during the year:

1. It took me about 5 months or more to make the banner. I think it was the best I have seen at the Highland Games. I had a past president of the Utah Scottish Assn. gape at it and comment on its beauty.
2. I also made some other decorations. I am working on some others.
3. Because of the wind and heat and potential for rain, I have purchased a special tent side to reduce the heat from sunlight. I also plan to set up our Pavilion, which is an 8ft.by 8ft. tent without sides. We have used it to house visitors from rain and sun as they enter the tent.
4. I would like to purchase another tent, as we need the room inside
5. I have completed a very nice looking Scottish Targe* and with a large sword and tartan drapery which will look nice at our entrance.
6. I have considered having some decorations next year celebrating the Battle of Bannockburn.

*A Scottish targe is defined as follows:

Scottish targe (pronounced tar-gie) was a round shield with loops on the back through one of which the arm was passed while the other was grasped by the hand. This name as applied to a shield that goes back to the 12th century and was used especially by the Scots. The typical Scottish targe was about 20 inches in diameter, and was made of wood covered with leather studded with brass bosses. It had a central spike, which was sometimes as much as ten inches long and could be unscrewed and carried in a pocket in the skin lining on the back of the targe.

Member Update From Charles Diman

Membership Report - 8/30/2013

Honorary Members -	6
Life Members -	54
Annual Members -	153
Total	213

Change since last meeting: one annual member (James and Karen Hart)

Our Best Wishes To

Bill Blair of Menlo Park, California as he undergoes knee replacement surgery

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Sign at a Scottish golf course: 'Members will refrain from picking up lost balls until they have stopped rolling.'

Have you heard about the lecherous Scotsman who lured a girl up to his attic to see his etchings? He sold her four of them.

A Scotsman took a girl for a romantic ride in his taxi...She was so beautiful he could hardly keep his eye on the meter.

It was a hot summer afternoon in a small Scottish village, and all the men were pursuing their favourite hobby - drinking whisky in the pub. Suddenly, the door bursts open and a man comes in panting, his tongue lolling and totally black.

"What happened Mac?" enquired one of the regulars. "Well," said Mac, "a bottle of whisky fell on the hot tar road."

Q. How many Scotsmen does it take to change a light bulb?

A. 21! One to hold the bulb and 20 to drink until the room spins.

THIRD GENERATION WEE LASSIE WINNER!



Kaia Blair Few (age 4) just started taking lessons a few months ago and has already won several medals in competitions. She is the daughter of Christy Blair Pixley Few who was an award winning Highland Dancer-so the tradition continues.

From Kaia's Grandmother, Barbara Blair Pixley

Traveling Colorado Members

**By Leslie Blair Gallagher,
Colorado Co-Commissioner**

Leslie Blair Gallagher and Allan Blair attended the 164th Annual Scottish Games in Livonia, MI on our way to celebrate Aunt Maggie Blair Dupras' 85th birthday up on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. We decided to attend these games as we really enjoyed our first visit in 2008 when the Clan Blair Society had their AGM at the festival.

Sadly, Clan Blair did not have a tent on clan row. The clan row at these games is far smaller than our Colorado games. There were, however, Bairds and Nesbits and the largest contingent of Buchanans we have ever seen.

We attended the Friday night Ceilidh where we met Jerry Beasley who is a member of the Saint Andrew's Society of Detroit and a Blair from his grandmother! He recognized dad's kilt, as his kilt is also made from the Old Blair Tartan (which was commissioned in 1948 as opposed to the Modern, which was commissioned in 1963). We had a lovely time visiting with him, his wife, Kelly, and his daughters.

These Games are held for one day only, with the Ceilidh on Friday. There was lots of music, both Celtic Fusion Bands and Pipe Bands, dancing, and historical displays. The features of these games are Clan Row, a Genealogy Tent, The Animals of Scotland, The Historical Reenactment and Encampment (where I sat and spent time with the spinners), Heavy Athletics and The Celtic Marketplace.

We met with and chatted with a number of members of the Saint Andrew's Society who are the presenters of the games as well as members of the various bands.

In all, it was a nice day, enjoyable and well presented. If we go to MI for the auntie's 90th birthday in 5 years, we plan to attend again.



Allen Blair and Jerry Beasley

Reminder about Dues: From Charles Diman

2014 Dues are due by January 1, 2014. Please take a minute to either write out a check or better yet, get on-line to renew, using PayPal. It is very quick and easy. Just go to www.clanblair.org and select, either CBS Join, or the Members only site. The information needed to access the Members only site of our webpage is:

Username clanblair (all lowercase)

Password cbs1988

Then go to membership renewal and click on which option you want.

Make the checks payable to Clan Blair Society and mail to:

Membership Chair, 3413 Sunnybrook Drive,
Charlotte, NC 28210-4715



*Lord Sempill showing airplane to
Japanese Admiral Togo Heihachiro, 1921*

BRITAIN'S GREATEST TRAITOR LORD WILLIAM SEMPILL [1893 – 1965] AND THE BLAIR LINK TO TREASON AND MURDER

By Jack R. Blair, Sydney, Australia

*(This is the 2nd part of the fascinating two-part
saga sent by Jack R. Blair of Sydney, Australia.
The first portion was in the June, 2013,
newsletter :)*

The Blair link to infamy:

The Blair-Sempill link reaches back to the history of the 16th century to 11 May 1565, when John Blair of Blair (later Lord Blair) married Grisel Sempill, 11th child of Lord Robert Sempill 3rd Baronet, and 5th daughter of his second wife, Elizabeth Carlyle.

At this period in history, both Robert Sempill and son-in-law John Blair were somewhat bloodthirsty characters, both being involved in murder. On 21 May 1577, John Blair together with his brother William and 25 other persons were indicted for murdering Thomas Crawford and his servants. John Blair and his brother

William were convicted and fined 5000 pounds and 2000 pounds respectively just happened to be the Archbishop's mistress and imprisoned nightly in Blackness Castle from 8.00 pm after entering into an agreement 'not to escape therefrom', until they were relieved, presumably in the mornings!. John Blair would have been aged about 30.

Scottish law must have been extremely lenient because John Blair's rapid rehabilitation enabled him, three years later in 1580, to sit in a Court of Assize at the trial of Arthur Hamiltoun for implication in the murder of the two Regents, Murray and Lennox.

In 1593 John Blair became one of the sureties for John, Earl of Menteith, who had been accused of committing 'a serious and violent crime'.

In 1602, John Blair was one of the speakers to the jury at the trial of John Mure of Auchindrane accused of murdering Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean.

On 14 February 1605, a Chancery Precept confirmed him as 'John, Lord Blair of Blair' at the age of 58, four years before his death in November 1609. He was pre-deceased by his wife, Lady Grisel Blair in February of the same year.

John Blair's father-in-law, Lord Robert Sempill 3rd – also a traitor.

John Blair's father-in-law, Lord Robert Sempill 3rd, seems to have been a larrikin*** from boyhood and throughout much of his life was recklessly committing offences that today would be called criminal behavior. Through his aristocratic connections, however, he nearly always managed to escape conviction. Other "bad apples" appear in the Sempill lineage down the centuries that make for fascinating reading.

Lord Robert Sempill 3rd was pardoned with his father and two of his younger brothers for the murder of Cornelius Machetema at the tollbooth, Edinburgh, in 1526. The Court freed Sempill and his collaborators after Grizel, eldest child and

1st daughter of his first wife, Isabel Hamilton, persuaded Archbishop John Hamilton of St. Andrews, mid-Scotland, to intercede on her father's behalf so that he escaped prison and beheading. Of course, Grizel.

By 1533, Sempill was Governor and Constable of Douglas Castle. He again committed murder and was exiled in England in 1541. Murder seemed to be just a game because by 1543/44, Sempill was back in Scotland, then was named Sheriff of Renfrew, and became Bailiff of the Regality of Paisley about 1544. Sempill was taken prisoner at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547, and continued his seemingly compulsive habit by killing William Chrichton 5th Lord Crichton of Sanquhar in 1550; subscribed the Earl of Arran's bond 1553/4; supported the Queen Regent against the Lords of the Congregation resulting in Sempill Castle being besieged and taken in 1560. In 1567, despite his Roman Catholicism, he joined the 'Association to Defend King James VI'. He commanded the vanguard at the Battle of Carberry Hill in 1567, and was present at the opening of the infamous "casket letter." He fought against Queen Mary at the Battle of Langside 1568, became joint lieutenant of the Western Ports in 1568, he was kidnapped by the Hamiltons in 1570 and was made a Privy Councilor in 1571. He was named Lieutenant General of Justice of Lanark and Renfrew in 1572. He was "put to the horn" and excommunicated in 1573 (in Scottish Law this meant he was "issued with a document officially denouncing him as a rebel against the State (traitor)).

So much for John Blair's father-in-law, whose volatile life seemed to swing from one extreme to the other. He died between 1.8.1573 and 12.1.1575/6. One cannot help wondering how Lord Sempill managed to find time to marry two wives, father 15 children and occasionally pop home for dinner!

*** "larrikin": **Larrikinism** is the name given to the Australian folk tradition of irreverence, mockery of authority and disregard for rigid norms of propriety.

Blairquhan Castle Has Been Sold



Elite Ayrshire Business Circle marks handover of Blairquhan Castle to new Chinese owners

Ayrshire, Scotland, 1 December 2012--Elite Ayrshire Business Circle executive chair Norman Geddes presided at a ceremony this week to mark the official handover of historic Blairquhan Castle in Straiton to its new Chinese owners.

The castle has been sold to a Chinese company, which bottles mineral water for distribution around the world.

The new owners of the 190-year-old castle in the heart of the Ayrshire countryside are Ganten Scotland, an offshoot of an international business based in the south China province of Guangdong.

The Regency House property will continue to provide upmarket accommodation, but with a renewed focus on guests from the Far East.

Blairquhan, the 14-bedroom ancestral home of Sir Patrick and Lady Hunter Blair, was put on the market for £4.85 million two years ago. Now a deal has been done that secures the future of the house itself along with the successful weddings and conference business and the jobs of local staff. Patrick, the 9th

Baronet of Dunskey, has confirmed that the family estate will be repositioned around Milton of Blairquhan, the dower house.

Sir Patrick said: “Marguerite and I look forward to supporting our new neighbours in this exciting venture.

“This is great news for the local economy.”

Sir Patrick Hunter Blair, formerly of Carsphairn, moved back to Scotland from County Down, Northern Ireland, when he inherited the property in 2004.

Blairquhan’s interiors were used to represent Balmoral in the hit film *The Queen*, starring Helen Mirren, one of many times that the castle has featured in movies and on television.

The new owners have pledged to be sympathetic custodians of the fine house and surrounding lands, having already spent much time at the estate.

Mr. Zhou Jing Liang, owner and managing director of Ganten China, said: “Every care shall be taken in the future preservation and maintenance of these valued and traditional assets.

“Ganten wish to expand and diversify in Scotland with the aim of becoming a provider of top level accommodation and hospitality for elite Chinese and foreign tourists who desire only the best.”

Their aim is to stimulate business between China and Scotland and believe that they are the trailblazers, bringing valuable investment to Scotland.

The company is very sensitive to the cultural and historical aspects of Scotland and wishes their move to be seen as promoting business here and culture in China.

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September 2013

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