



Ardchoille

Newsletter of the American Clan Gregor Society



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Winter 2013



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For more Clan information
please visit our website at:
<http://www.acgsus.org/>



The views and opinions
expressed in any of the articles
within this publication are not
necessarily the views or opinions
of the ACGS.

From The Desk Of The Chieftain (Submitted by Lois Ann Garlitz)

Remembrance; From the Desk of the Chieftain

As I am beginning to write this, it is shortly before Veterans' Day, 11 November.

November is a time of remembrance and thanksgiving for many of us. Not long ago, my daughter and I watched a family film "Beautiful Dreamer" (2006). The story, based on true events, was of an airman who was shot down with his plane in Europe during WWII, and suffered amnesia afterward due to a head injury as a POW. It reminded me of my Uncle Alfred, my mother's brother and RCAF pilot, who also went down with his plane but did not survive the crash, although two crew men did. So many of us have stories to tell of soldier's sacrifices within our own families. Even Country music honored our soldiers this year by selecting a song of the year "I Drive Your truck" retelling the story of how a dad remembers his soldier son's sacrifice in Afghanistan.

By the time you read this it will be winter holiday time with the celebrations of Christmas and New Year's. Quite often this involves meeting the expectations of children and friends as we teach and share with them our own family traditions. One of my own favorite activities this time of year is the sending and receiving of cards and emails from friends I have not had news from since last year.

A message from our hereditary Chief, Sir Malcolm MacGregor of MacGregor came to us at the Richmond Gathering: "This message comes with all good wishes to American Clan Gregor Society for a successful Gathering at Richmond. I hope you all have a fruitful and beneficial few days at this historic town within the spirit of Clan Gregor. With best wishes, Sincerely, Malcolm MacGregor of MacGregor".

Late fall must be the time of severe weather news. Last year it was mega storm Sandy on our east coast and this year it is super typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Also as last year, it is good to hear that our MacGregor friends are OK, but there is much devastation and much help is needed. I encourage you to give whatever assistance you are able.

Best wishes for a joyous and peaceful Christmas season and a Happy New Year.





The Dig at Stronmilchan

(Submitted by Keith MacGregor)



On July 21, 2013 a group of MacGregors experienced something “historical” in a way not found in books or even most research. Following on GPR discoveries made in the field at Stronmilchan, Dalmally in 2012, (made possible through our generous donors), a number of us were literally able to dig down into that history to unearth a past that has seldom been investigated before - *in situ*. In fact, before the project was started two years ago, there were precious few researchers, or scholars (even MacGregors) who were even aware that the site existed, much less what it might hold, or even exactly where it was. Except for references in the Dean of Lismore and a few disjointed references scattered through the RCAHMS, legal documents, and rental records kept primarily by the Campbells, the information may not be readily apparent in MacGregor lore.

Stronmilchan is, of course, the home of the MacGregor chiefs, most likely for a number of centuries but certainly between 1390 and 1624 AD. In his Obituaries, James MacGregor (Dean of Lismore), who lived about 1480-1551, refers to at least 5 of our chiefs as connected with Stronmilchan, dying there and being buried about a mile to the east in Dalmally church (known locally as *Clachan Dysart*). So our interest in finding out more about Stronmilchan begins right there!

The entire medieval period in Scotland is dominated by the issues of kingly succession and territorial possession. In my previous article I suggested that two key events decided the issue of land ownership in Argyll and particularly in Glen Orchy in the early clan period - the first was a Royal grant via the Earl of Ross to the MacGregors at about 1225 AD, and the second is sweeping change effected by Robert Bruce in the early 14th century, giving these and other lands and titles to Neil Campbell and thus setting the stage for the rise to power of that clan. The Royal grant, which may represent the only written legal title the clan held to Glen Orchy as forfeited estates of the Lords of the Isles, may have been given to Hugh of Orchy (the ‘of’ signifies possession or superiority in an area), MacGregor chief and leader under Ferchar mac in t’Sagairt, an upstart Earl of Ross, for the clan’s fighting services in ridding Argyll of the Lords of the Isles, according to George Eyre-Todd. Other sources claim it was Vikings who were chased out, but more likely it was a combination of both, as Scottish history often spawns strange alliances. In any case this was a formidable accomplishment and a high-water mark in MacGregor history.

The holdings granted as “Glenurchy” and later designated as “the 20 merkland of Stronmilchan” actually included all the major farms and steadings in Glenstrae and Glenurchy (earlier spelling) – Castles, Duileter, Brackly, Tullich, Edindonach, Craig, and a number of smaller properties as well as the main settlement at Stronmilchan. Excepting Kilchurn castle (which may have been ours in earlier times) these lands amount to virtually all the fertile areas surrounding the Strae and Orchy rivers in these parts. Hence the appellation “MacGregor of the Three Glens” – although there is some considerable discussion about whether the third one might be Glenlyon, Glen Lochy, or even Glen Dochart.

First results from the field at Stronmilchan.

This must be the first time I can recall that considerable numbers of people came out from the glen to work together with our members on a significant, and sometimes back-breaking project (see pictures!). In practical terms it meant that instead of the three trenches we had originally anticipated, we were able to dig six trenches, one to a depth of seven feet. That in turn taught us that geology is not always predictable. In some trenches, years of plowing made it difficult to get down below the Victorian period in terms of artifacts, while in others the foundations of structures which were possibly from the middle ages were only a foot or two below the surface.

Until we receive the carbon-dating results, the oldest find at Stronmilchan must go to Odile Grenet and her mother Margaret Browne who were digging in trench 5, suspected to be a well. After unearthing numerous rabbit holes (decidedly not ancient!), a small object turned up at about two feet. It was assessed by Charlotte as a prehistoric flint arrowhead which may have been brought up near the surface by the plowing.

At trench 3 Charlotte, Hendrik, and Gavin were joined by Jim Wilkin, and later Doug Law, both of Dalmally Historical Association, who ended up spending most of the week in the field, and Angelika, whom we can thank for many of the pictures. Hendrik gets credit for “hitting the wall” when he uncovered a line of large foundation stones which had not been hauled off and which formed a part broken orange wall. Pieces of slag iron were found just north of the wall, indicating a possible forging operation. For several days, Charlotte, with various helpers, took the trench down to a depth of seven feet, following variations and discolorations and collecting samples. I remember looking over at one point and only seeing her straw hat bobbing up and down as she tossed out buckets of dirt. Well done Charlotte!

This wall was clearly more substantial (about 3 feet thick) than the orange lines indicate, and it’s my humble theory that it may have been the wall of an earlier settlement before it was expanded to the red wall.

By sighting along the fragments now visible, we noticed that they appeared to be connected, forming a long, continuous line roughly along the south side of the mound and running almost the full length of it. I set about opening trench 6 at the west end of that line to see where it was all going.

By ignoring the rain on Friday we were able to push our dig times through the last morning. I



L-R: Richard McGregor, Gavin MacGregor, Katy Firth, Doug Law behind Ishbel McGregor, Anne Rae, Keith MacGregor,



Stronmilchan Dig Con't...



was determined to see where this wall went in trench 6 especially as Richard and Ishbel, only a few feet away, were finding more substantial, if undefined, rock formations at the edge of the mound. After clearing rubble which included a Victorian bedstand, well rusted and broken in pieces by the ploughs, I moved along one large rock at a time. The field has been "robbed out" of its stones many times over the centuries, but these were almost too big to lift—at least by one farmer. And they were deep enough to spare the plows, fortunately for our endeavor.

More rain, and with the back-filling still ahead of us, I had to toss in the trowel, but not before it had become abundantly clear that this wall would likely connect with the large wall that continued all the way west to the White House. That moment was a startling realization: this was a substantial wall, not terribly apparent on the survey, which now could be over 500 feet in continuous length from the White House to nearly the other side of the field and parallel to the river. A huge wall by any standard in this glen. A wall with carbon deposits on the inside (hearths, smithy?), running very near to the largest building on the mound and yet still allowing the possibility of a drawbridge, guarded by Sites A and C. Impressive!

The picture is immediately recognizable as a very large complex, and at a time when there were no roads, The White House, now connected, is the closest structure to the river, the main access route at the time.

So how do we rate our adventure, prior to receiving the professional report later this year? For one thing, we know that the centuries really do pile up and as with all research, you sometimes have to look deep to find what you're looking for. What's left of our concrete MacGregor past at this important site? We really don't know yet and there is always more to be done. But the technology is better than ever and so is our knowledge base. The next time a MacGregor visits these homelands, he will be able to look upon this field with new insights, and as we have done, to use his imagination to reconstruct the events that happened here. That in itself is reward enough.

Special thanks go out to those who donated financial support for the project – without your keen interest and generous giving the project would not be possible.

Once this project is completed, a full report will be available for sale as an "Occasional Paper" from the Clan Gregor Society, Scotland
Keith MacGregor



Joy Law, Odile Grenet and Mavis MacGregor



Hendrik Kappler and Richard McGregor
(Anne Rae in background)



Ishbel McGregor



Ishbel McGregor and Richard McGregor



Morag Malcolm, and
Keith MacGregor



Richard McGregor, Morag Malcolm,
Keith MacGregor and Hendrik Kappler



L-R: Keith MacGregor (digging), Morag Malcolm,
Gavin MacGregor, Hendrick Kappler (in kilt),
Richard McGregor and Anne Rae



Ye pile o' sods!





New Officers & Info!

(Submitted by Lois Ann Garlitz)



Assistant Chieftain – Keith D. Gregg

I was born in California and grew up outside Chicago Illinois.

I joined the US Navy and retired a Senior Chief after 21 years of service. I was on nuclear submarines and served on the USS Sculpin, USS George C. Marshall and USS Toledo. I was a training manager and maintenance manager. I am now a member of the VFW.

After service I was a nuclear operator for six years at a civilian nuclear plant in NY. I then qualified as a level 3 nuclear quality control inspector for mechanical and electrical and qualified as a principle analyst.

I have been married since 1985 to Judi and we have 6 children.

My hobbies are blacksmithing, gunsmithing / shooting, fishing and gardening.

Historian - Elizabeth Magruder Joiner

Elizabeth Magruder Joiner has been elected the new Historian for ACGS. She is the daughter of Abbey and Lillian Magruder. Elizabeth is a past ACGS Council Member at Large. She is married to John Andrew Joiner and they have a daughter, Abbey Elizabeth Joiner (member #3001) who is twenty years old. They live in Banner Elk, NC where Elizabeth is a year round volunteer with the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games where she also works alongside Thad Osborne, handling tent responsibilities for ACGS. Elizabeth's mother, Lillian, spent several years as Historian for ACGS and should be the perfect mentor for this position.

Contact Elizabeth with all notices of births, deaths and marriages via email at ejoiner@skybest.com or mail at 342 Tynerridge Rd., Banner Elk, NC 28604. Please include full name(s), Clan number, where applicable, as well as pertinent dates. Photographs are nice, too! Information will be published in the ACGS yearbook.

Trustee - Margaret Sanderfield

I was born the third child of Vernon & Eileen Pruett of Mason City, IL. I graduated from Mason City High School and Midstate College in Peoria, IL. My career path took me to the United States government where I retired after 38 years of dedicated service.

I married in 1974 and moved to Athens, IL. My son, Troy, was born in 1977. In 1985, Mom introduced my family to the MacGregor Society with the Gathering in Natchez, MS. We became interested in our Celtic heritage and the MacGregors. We then joined the American Clan Gregor Society where I have been on the Council and a State Deputy.

We joined the St. Andrew's Society of Central IL where Troy played in the St. Andrew's Pipes & Drums and I have held offices of Member at Large and historian plus numerous chairs for the Central IL Highland Games.

In my retirement, I enjoy being active in church activities, ACGS, Athens Library, St. Andrew's Society & several other organizations. I, also, enjoy working on genealogy, traveling, reading, walking, dancing, and my 3 year old grandson Jayden.

Registrar – Jean Peter Lehr

Jeanne Lehr was born and raised in a suburban area 35 miles north of Chicago, Illinois. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. In 1980 her employer transferred her to St. Louis, where she met and married her husband Roger in 1987. Her husband Roger passed away on October 17, 2010. Roger and Jeanne did not have children. Jeanne cares for her aged, widowed aunt who is in assisted living in Rockford, Illinois.

Jeanne is a very active member of the P.E.O. Sisterhood and has served in officer positions in her local chapter and Missouri State Chapter. She is a member of the Covenant Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, Missouri and sings in the choir. When elections occur, Jeanne serves as a supervisory election judge for St. Louis County. She was a long standing member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and served in officer positions at both the local club and district levels. She is an active member of the National Association of Parliamentarians and has served in officer positions for her local unit. She is also an active member of the St. Louis Water Gardening Society and serves as the society Librarian and as Parliamentarian on the Board of Directors. Jeanne's favorite pastimes have been many and varied over the years which even included moonlighting with a Chinese Cuisine caterer for almost two years - starting as a dish washer and ending as his number two chef.

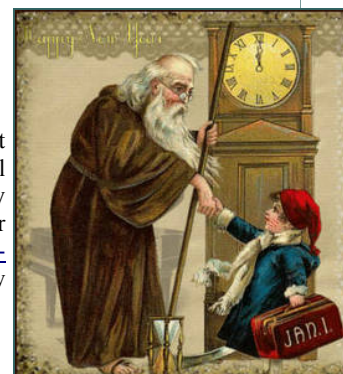
New Appointed Officers since the Gathering

Council Member At Large – Mary Kate Gregg

Council Member At Large – Jean MacGregor Simon

IT Committee – Richard R. Walker, chair

News from the MML.... Another person new to us who we met at the Richmond Gathering was Benjamin Scott Blake, the new head of Special Collections at the University of Baltimore's Langsdale Library where our Marshall Magruder Library is housed. Ben has replaced Thomas Hollowak, who retired last May 2013. As you may remember, Thomas was responsible for the digitization of all our yearbooks and placing all those images on their website for us to enjoy. You can read more about Benjamin at <http://langsdale.ubalt.edu/special-collections/about.cfm> **CHANGE! PLEASE TAKE NOTE:** the link to ACGS's Digital Library is now <http://ubalt.libguides.com/acgs>





Highlights of the 2013 Gathering!

(Submitted by Mary Kate Gregg)



The 104th Clan Gathering was held at the Marriott Richmond West Hotel. The hotel's hospitality and service was excellent and was most appreciated by attendees. The weather cooperated with a perfect autumn season; not too hot and not too cold. The nice weather certainly contributed to making the bus tour very enjoyable. Our coach learned much about the Richmond environments because of the efforts of tour guide Jim Magruder. He had spent a considerable amount of time researching the history and facts pertaining to the Richmond area and we learned a great deal about the city. We felt that the bus drivers had their hands full guiding us through many narrow streets of Richmond itself.

The memorial service was held at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. The service was conducted by ACGS Chaplain Thaddeus Osborne. Once again we had a beautiful setting to remember our recently deceased members. The church with its quiet peacefulness, eloquent architecture and superb wood carvings created a solemn respect to our heritage. Lunch was served at the church and was enjoyed by all. The tour continued to the Hollywood Cemetery for the laying of the wreath. There was a surprise waiting for us; the daughter of Col. Henry Magruder Taylor told of her fond memories and some history of her family.

The last tour stop was at the Agecroft Hall in the Windsor Farms subdivision. It's quite famous for being transported from England and what it means to the Richmond community. It has an impressive history. The Friday evening Ceilidh was a rousing, bouncing affair. All spirits were high with dancing, music, pipes and companionship.

The following morning began with the General Meeting. This is where everyone was updated on the recent happenings of the Clan. Much information was shared and discussed. The day being warm and sunny, the afternoon Pipe Band Concert was held outdoors in a nearby shady venue to the delight of the young and old.

The Annual Banquet brought out all members in their finest regal attire, sharing conversations, program, meal and laughter. This closed out our time together for this gathering. See you at the 105th Gathering for more adventures.



The ACGS Recruiting Sergeants

(Submitted by Randy Walker—RDC)



STATE DEPUTY CHIEFTAINS

At present we have thirty State Deputy Chieftains. Four of them were new to the job in 2013. About twenty-five percent of new ACGS memberships are the result of the efforts of our SDCs who represent the Society at the various Highland Games and other Scottish Heritage events.

The State Deputy Chieftains, along with the ACGS Website, are the public face of our Society. These are the folks who "show the Tartan" for the world to see. These are the folks who talk about Clan Gregor history and assist prospective new members with making application for membership in the Society.

I think anyone who has served the Society, as State Deputy Chieftain will say that it is a labor of love. Love for their own MacGregor heritage, love for our Society and a love for things Scottish.

This is not an easy job. Each individual meets most of the costs related to representing the ACGS out of their own pocket. The purchase or rental of tents, tables, and chairs, table covers, banners, and flags, plus most of the materials required to make an attractive presentation for visitors to the ACGS Clan Tent. Then, there is the set up and take down of the Clan Tent, cleaning, repairing, replacing, and the travel to and from the event location, along with lodging expenses. Sometimes the weather is beautiful and sometimes it is just downright miserable. Sometimes very few people stop to visit Clan Gregor and other times you are overwhelmed with visitors.

In some areas of the country other members of the Society come out to assist the SDC at the various events and that assistance is really appreciated. In other areas of the country the SDC or the SDC and spouse/children pretty much hold things together.

Currently the Society needs additional SDCs. Florida will lose its second SDC this year due to health issues. If any Florida members think they might like to give this a try please contact our Chieftain to discuss the obligations and expectations. We also need additional SDCs in California, Texas, New York and Tennessee. If you don't think you can take on the SDC role perhaps you can help out a current SDC to get a feel for what is involved. If so contact them and find out how you can help out. I am certain they will welcome the help and who knows you may decide these events are kind of fun.

If you think you might like to give this SDC thing a try...there is a guide available to assist you in getting started. Currently the Society does provide up to \$100.00 in reimbursement for event participation costs and there is always a willing RDC or another SDC who will lend a hand in getting you off to a good start.





National Capital Tartan Day Honors First Minister of Scotland (Submitted by Juliette Engel)



In 1998 Senator Trent Lott, successfully lobbied the Senate for the designation of April 6 as National Tartan Day "to recognize the outstanding achievements and contributions made by Scottish Americans to the United States".^[23] According to Wikipedia, "Senate Resolution 155, passed on March 20, 1998, referred to the predominance of Scots among the Founding Fathers and claimed that the American Declaration of Independence was "modeled on" the Declaration of Abroath written in 1320. The resolution makes reference to the high number of Scottish Americans represented among our Founding Fathers.

In 2005, the House of Representatives adopted House Resolution 41, which designates April 6 of each year as "National Tartan Day." The chief sponsors were Congressmen Mike McIntyre from North Carolina and John Duncan from Tennessee. Four years later, a joint effort by the National Capital Tartan Day Committee and the American-Scottish Foundation resulted in a flood of letters and petitions to the President of the United States and on April 4 2008, President George W. Bush signed a Presidential Proclamation making April 6th National Tartan Day.



In Washington DC, Tartan Day 2013 was recognized with the Annual Tartan Day Symposium and Congressional Reception in the US Capital Visitors Center on April 9th, 2013 from 2:00 to 7:00 PM. A theme of "Scotland and the Diaspora: Getting Connected for the 21st Century" was selected as this year's Symposium topic. ACGS Librarian, John Bellassai, chaired the National Capital Tartan Day Committee as well as chairing the symposium which featured ACGS member and US Representative of CGS Scotland Keith MacGregor who updated attendees on the MacGregor DNA Project.



L to R: John King Bellassai, Dr. Juliette Engel
with Alex Salmond & Keith MacGregor

This year the Congressional Reception was attended by a high level government delegation from Scotland led by First Minister of Scotland, Alex Salmond, the leading advocate for Scottish independence with the proposed referendum in 2014. Also present were former First Minister of Scotland Henry MacLeish, Presiding Officer of Scottish Parliament Tricia Marwick, MSP, with Members of Parliament Bruce Crawford, MSP, and Duncan McNeil, MSP.

The MacGregors were well represented as they usually are at events sponsored by the St. Andrews Society of Washington DC. Other MacGregors spotted at the event in addition to Keith MacGregor and John Bellassai were Amedee Friestedt, Randy Gregory, Juge Gregg, and Juliette Engel.



ACGS Website Facelift! (Submitted by Lois Ann Garlitz)



When you get a minute, have a look at new content on our website at www.acgsus.org, in case you have not looked lately. There are three new photo albums under events and a new blog post from the Chieftain.

If you are aware of upcoming events in your area where MacGregors will be in attendance, please notify the webmaster so they can be posted.

Have questions? Let me know... Thanks everyone! Lois Ann



Yuletide Customs Of Old Scotland



Black Bun. Originally Twelfth Night Cake. It is a very rich fruit cake, almost solid with fruit, almonds, spices and the ingredients are bound together with plenty of Whisky. The stiff mixture is put into a cake tin lined with a rich short pastry and baked.

This takes the place of the even more ancient **Sun Cakes**. A legacy from Scotland's close associations with Scandinavia. Sun cakes were baked with a hole in the centre and symmetrical lines around, representing the rays of the Sun. This pattern is now found on the modern Scottish Shortbread, and has been misidentified as convenient slices marked onto the shortbread!

Bees leave hives Xmas Morn. There is an old belief that early on Christmas Morning all bees will leave their hives, swarm, and then return. Many old Scots tell tales of having witnessed this happening, though no-one can explain why. One explanation is that bees get curious about their surroundings, and if there is unexpected activity they will want to check it out to see if there is any danger. As people were often up and about on Christmas night observing various traditions, or just returning from the night services, the bees would sense the disturbance and come out to see what was going on.

The Candlemas Bull was in reality a cloud. It was believed that a bull would cross the sky in the form of a cloud, early on the morning on Candlemas, February 2nd. From its appearance people would divine. An East travelling cloud foretold a good year, south meant a poor grain year, but if it faced to the west the year would be poor. This custom was a remnant of the ancient Mithraic religion, when the Bull-god would come at the start of Spring to warn of the year the farmers could expect.

All of the Celtic countries have a similar custom of lighting a candle at Christmastime to light the way of a stranger.

In Scotland was the Oidche Choinnle, or Night of Candles. Candles were placed in every window to light the way for the Holy Family on Christmas Eve and First Footers on New Years Eve. Shopkeepers gave their customers Yule Candles as a symbol of goodwill wishing them a 'Fire to warm you by, and a light to guide you'.



Electronic Newsletters!

(Submitted by Lois Ann Garllitz)



Electronic newsletters are coming!

In an effort to streamline our communication to members, and be thrifty with our General Fund, an eArchoille is coming to the inbox of your email provider and/or our website soon. This Winter/December 2013 issue of our newsletter is planned to be the final issue which will be mailed to all our active members.

Here is how this will occur. As soon as you read this news, members with email addresses should consult the June 2013 Membership directory to assure we have your correct email address – and take a look at your phone number too while you are at it :-). If a correction needs to be made, contact the new Assistant Chieftain, Keith D. Gregg.

You will have another opportunity to alert us about an address correction when the dues notices come out in January. At that time you will be asked if you choose to opt-out of e-newsletters because you either do not have an email address or access to the internet (perhaps when a grandchild visits or at your local library). A reminder will be found in the Spring 2014 newsletter

You may also clip or copy this section below and mail it to;

Keith D. Gregg, Assistant Chieftain
12578 Rasbeck Road, Wolcott, NY 14590-9749

greggclan@hotmail.com



Member name _____ ACGS# _____

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THE AMERICAN CLAN GREGOR SOCIETY
"ARDCHOILLE"
NEWSLETTER OF
KEITH D. GREGG
12578 RASBECK ROAD
WOLCOTT, NY 14590-9749
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Greetings & Reminders

(Submitted by Lori Connery)



Seasons Greetings!
I wish you all a
Very Merry Christmas
And a Joyous New Year Celebration!

Editor Reminders!

Submission Dates for next year!

Spring: February 15, 2014

Summer: May 15, 2014

Winter: October 15, 2014

Please send your submissions to clan-gregor-mn@comcast.net. And be sure you include "ACGS newsletter article" in the subject heading in your email submissions. I will recognize its purpose right away!

I would love to hear new ideas for future articles!