



The Lion's Face



Newsletter of Clan Farquharson UK

NUMBER SIX

NOVEMBER 2003

GATHERING 2003



Group of clan members with Clan Chief at the Ballater Highland Games 2003

TARTAN CREDIT CARD

By the time you receive this newsletter the tartan credit card should be operating in the UK. Please do have a look at the web site which is www.MyClan.com.

CONGRATULATIONS !

We send our warmest congratulations and best wishes to Andrew Farquharson of Edinburgh and his new wife. They married during our 2003 Gathering weekend. We look forward to seeing them both, and Angela, at the 2004 Gathering.

Look on the Website www.farquharson-clan.co.uk !

Another very enjoyable Gathering !

And what glorious weather to go with it 56 members attended the various activities which, for the first time, included a visit to the Ballater Highland Games. Everything got off to a well-oiled start in the bar of the Monaltrie Hotel on the Wednesday evening and then on the Thursday the games took place. We hired a large tent from the Ballater Angling Association and this was certainly big enough to accommodate our members and a table of leaflets and memorabilia. We had a large banner made in order to advertise the Clan and this did the job by attracting lots of people to the Clan tent, and not just Farquharsons. These games are held in the traditional style, without lots of commercial tents, although there are sufficient commercial outlets to provide a variety of food and drink. Our Clan Chief was the Chieftain for the games and he and Madame Farquharson were piped into the arena and escorted to their seats by the Chairman of the Games Society. After some prize giving the chief visited our Clan tent and spent some time chatting to members.



In the evening there was a ceilidh in one of the village halls which proved to be very lively indeed and rounded off a thoroughly enjoyable day

We kept the Friday as a “day off” for sightseeing and rest so that members were fully prepared for our own ceilidh that

evening. We had the same band as last year and they were just as good. Although the dance floor was a little small everybody had a great time and danced until after midnight. Geoffrey brought a young contingent of very capable and enthusiastic dancers, which was very welcome.

During Saturday morning several members of the royal family were seen shopping in Ballater. Later on Saturday morning we held our annual general meeting at which the Clan Chief presided. He was greeted at the hotel door by our Piper and piped into the meeting room. The usual business was conducted and much to the relief of Alan Caig (!) he handed over the presidency to our new President, Gordon Farquharson. Alan was presented with a very generous token of the appreciation of the clan for his work in getting the Clan society going. The formal business of the day was followed by an excellent Thai buffet lunch at the Monaltrie Hotel together with a complimentary drink very generously provided by the Clan Chief. After lunch our regular photographer came to the hotel and took the Clan photograph in the garden of the hotel. We all then scooted off to Invercauld House at the invitation of the Clan Chief for a tour of the house and some workshops. Gordon Farquharson had specially arranged a whisky-tasting by the Lochnagar Distillery (thanks to Margaret Finney at Lochnagar) and Geoffrey Farquharson held a workshop on family history. The president of Clan Farquharson USA, Sharon Farley, instructed the ladies in the making of a rosette from tartan material. Our two pipers held a very amusing workshop on the intricate workings of the bagpipes. Alan and Gordon were the first to try out the pipes with hilarious results. John Hardy fared rather better and even Jane Farquharson managed to extract a squeak. The next time you see a piper in the street, busking, please do give him some money

because he will have mastered an art way beyond the ability of ordinary men.



Alan makes hard work of it !



Gordon and John show how easy it is !

SUMMARY EXECUTION

During our 2003 gathering we met with Dr Sheila Sedgwick who is one of the directors of the Monaltrie Hotel who is a well-known author on local history. She has written many books of short stories and this is one of them.

Fionnlaidh Farquharson had trouble with his neighbours. The bonnet lairds of Aberarder were always fighting among themselves and even disputing his authority as representative of the Earl of Mar in the judicial matters. So he summoned nineteen of them to a meeting in a large barn at Aberarder, a locally accepted meeting place. The Farquharsons were present in considerable number. A "trial" got

underway and all nineteen were proved to have been implicated in some nefarious deed. Eighteen of them were strung up from the rafters of the barn. The building was divided into two, the smaller section being a waiting room, the larger one a courtroom where summary justice was dispensed. When number nineteen realised that none of the others had re-appeared he suspected foul deeds, so he escaped. The friends of the hanged men had the Farquharsons cited to appear before an Aberdeen court. They had little case because it could be proved that the offenders deserved the fate meted out to them for their heinous crimes by the representative of law and order. So a very clever lawyer charged Fionnlaidh with a secret hanging. This was virtually a charge of murder. The defenders pointed out that the hanging had taken place in a building where there were many windows. The barn was just like many others in the area, made of thatch and heather and it had many openings. The case against Fionnlaidh was dropped. The Earl of Mar, pleased with his officials for the treatment of troublemakers, gave Fionnlaidh the lands of Aberarder. While his strong hand ruled the area there was peace.

The next passage is taken from her book "The Story of Ballater"

The Origins of Ballater

The Ballater we know today is of fairly modern origin. The village began when in the 18th century accommodation was needed to deal with the overflow of visitors from Pannanich Wells, on the south side of the Dee and this became possible when a bridge was built over the Dee as an alternative to the ferry crossing. Ballater then was the ideal place to relax. It is still a mecca for visitors and for those retiring.

The name Baladar (baile challater) - settlement at the wooded stream, or perhaps, stream at the Pass, was used in Kirk records

from the end of the 16th century to the middle of the 18th for a few houses at the east end of the Pass of Ballater, behind Craigenddarroch and near to the Baladar burn. The settlement appears on Bleau's map that was published in Amsterdam in 1654. Kirk records indicate that in 1692 there were eight tenants and one tradesman (job unspecified) living in the hamlet.

The ecclesiastical and civic centre of a wide area was Tullich (tulach, a knoll or hillock). As with other Deeside settlements, it grew up at a meeting of routes - in this case where the Aberdeen to Braemar road met the North-South route of Glen Muick, crossing the Dee near Tomnakeist and going on to Donside. Roads were mere tracks and bridges few in number, so the ferry over the Dee at Dalmuickeachie was vitally important.

Tullich, the oldest inhabited centre on Upper Deeside has a long history. It was inhabited prior to 100 BC and an earth house or souterrain probably comes from that time. The Pictish dwellers in the area would have lived in huts and used the souterrain for storage. It runs in a semi-circle for almost 20 ft. and was built of stone, without any mortar, with a roof of granite slabs

The Church of Tullich was founded in the seventh century by Nathalan and was for generations the mother-Church of a considerable area. Like most Celtic missionaries, Nathalan picked an excellent site and put his wattle and daub on the knoll, hence Tulachnathlak, the knoll of Nathalan. In the 16th century, at the time of the Reformation, the Saints name was dropped, leaving Tulach or Tullich. Celtic missionaries were men of many skills: they were teachers, doctors, farmers and social workers.

There are many legends about Nathalan, the miraculous element increasing as time went by. As a penance when he had cursed the

weather that was ruining the crops he padlocked his hand to his leg and threw the key into the Pool of the Key (poll na hiurach) below his Church. He went to Rome on pilgrimage and one day bought a fish for his supper. Inside he found his key, unpadlocked his hand and leg and returned to Tullich. As a farmer, he cultivated the fields but at the time of famine, with no seed-corn left, God told him to sow sand. He had a good crop at Sluivannachie (the moor of blessing) west of Ballater. While legends abound, the Aberdeen Breviary states that Nathalan was born in 678 and buried at Tullich. His Church would not last long, but other buildings on the same site succeeded it. One was mutilated by the Reformers, but a 14th century doorway still stands and the Pictish Symbol stones, now gathered into an enclosure. There are 16 of these stones including a rare pre-800 AD stone, probably contemporary with Nathalan. It bears the somewhat indistinct carving of a double disk, Z rod, elephant and mirror. A large early granite font with drain hole is there too.

2004 GATHERING – Draft Programme

Wednesday 11 August

Informal meet in a bar (possibly Huntly Arms in Aboyne)

Thursday 12 August

Ballater Highland Games and Games Ceilidh in Ballater

Friday 13 August

Meet at Finzean Hall, Some Finzean History
Identified walks; Buffet lunch at Finzean Hall
Tour Lochnagar Distillery, Clan Ceilidh

Saturday 14 August

AGM, Visit Braemar Castle, Piper or Pipe Band
Possible Highland Games demonstration,
Buffet lunch – cheese & wine. Formal Dinner .

Sunday 15 August

Crathie Church Service
Visit Cairn na Cuinhe

Full details will be sent out early in the New Year

News Editor: Alan Caig