

FÀILTE CLOINN RAÒNALL



VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

May 2012

SCOTS GET JITTERY AS INDEPENDENCE VOTE NEARS

The Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) launched its formal *Yes Scotland* independence campaign at month's end with a huge rally, many speeches and with some qualms being expressed about solidarity amongst the diverse parties involved in the movement.

SNP's leader, *Alex Salmond's* reassuring words to voters that the Queen would remain head of state, his assurances of low-tax plans for corporations and "business as usual" messages sent to industry and commerce -even his proffered policies on NATO- have caused tensions with other supporting groups, particularly the *Scottish Greens* and *Socialist Party*. Many on the "No" side are suggesting this illustrates that the SNP has no agreed vision of what an independent Scotland might look like and is evidence of infighting already amongst its political allies. They accuse the "Yes" side of trying to make a virtue out of this uncertainty by pretending it is bravery that favours a "leap in the dark" by voting for such an uncertain future.

Such a strategy may be high-risk but Nationalists say such actions are just what Scotland needs, an opportunity to reinvent itself for the modern world, and describe it as "a bracing and energizing liberation". *Duncan Hamilton*, writer for *The Scotsman*, holds that such diversity of opinion is the essence of what this campaign is about. Every contributor at the launch accepted the necessity of independence as a means for delivering reform. After all, says Hamilton, the point is not to limit what independence means, but rather "to win independence and thereafter offer the widest possible choice to the people of Scotland".

And what will the "No" campaign, also due to be launched soon, present as its platform? Its main plank has been simply opposition to independence, but we have heard little about what they would put forth as solid arguments in favour of retaining the union. The stakes grow higher as the vote grows nearer.

GAELIC MAKING HEADWAY IN SCOTLAND



The Gaelic College of Celtic Arts and Crafts, in St. Ann's, Nova Scotia, has long been known for its strong support of the Gaelic language as the foundation upon which our culture can be maintained. Scotland, particularly with the resurgence of Scottish nationalism following the election of an independence government and growing pressure to stand on its own within the European Union, has followed suit. Indeed, it has moved ahead very quickly with the establishment a few months ago of a new theatre company,

First Bicycle, a bilingual operation performing in -mark this- English and Gaelic!

Canada's Gaelic College does have drama in the Gaelic language, though it is a possible choice of study during their immersion classes and may be selected during Summer Courses. Along with songs, fiddle, guitar and other outlets for your talents, participants can opt to study and perform a short play in Gaelic during the sessions. More information is available on the College's website: www.gaeliccollege.edu/.



TOUCHING THE OLD, OLD LANGUAGE

We did manage to spend that weekend in an immersion session at the Gaelic College in St. Ann's, Cape Breton. It was more enjoyable, and less onerous, than expected. Though plans have not been finalized, we are looking towards attending a full-week session in late August.

Besides having excellent teachers, amidst a background of that noted Cape Breton friendliness and hospitality, the method of instruction uses full immersion -Gaelic is the only language spoken- utilizing everyday situations and common items to ease the student, in a supportive atmosphere, through their shyness about speaking a new language aloud. Classes are smallish and very learner-friendly. Even those who say they had never even heard a Gaelic word before come away with the ability to converse on simple topics, even after that brief weekend experience mentioned above.

Apart from the certainty of acquiring *some* facility with one of the world's oldest languages, the geographical location of the college provides a beautiful setting for walks, nature gazing and historical wanderings. St. Ann's is at the end of an arm of the sea (St. Ann's Bay) in the upper reaches of Cape Breton and one of the oldest habitations. At the beginning of the famed Cabot Trail skirting the top of the highland area, you're always driving through some of the finest scenery anywhere. The Bay area is filled with artisans who encourage you to visit their studios.

Mind you, you'll find it difficult to tear yourself away from the goings-on at the College itself, and there will always be a few fiddlers handy and a number of robust voices ready to launch a ceilidh, along with a piano player or two willing to accompany the whole thing into the wee hours.

THE GREAT CLANRANALD BARD

We've written before about the fairly recent confirmation of the identity of the writer of a diary about the wanderings of Prince Charlie after Culloden. The excerpt below is from a book, *The Lyon in Mourning*, by Rev. Robert Forbes (Bishop of Ross and Caithness 1746-1775), in which he (Forbes) recounts the visit to him of Alexander MacDonald (the greatest Scottish bard) in which the diary was presented along with much description on its accuracy and of those whose stories it tells.

The *Lyon in Mourning* was published by the University Press in Edinburgh for the *Scottish History Society* and edited by *Henry Paton, MA*, in 1895. You'll note the diary was handwritten by the Bard, *Young Clanranald* and *MacDonald of Glenaladale*, but mainly in Alexander's hand.

Upon Monday afternoon, December 28th, 1747, Captain Alexander MacDonald, brother german of .Eneas or Angus MacDonald of Daley in Moidart, of the family of Clanranald, and full coasin-german to Miss Flora Macdonald, visited me in my own room and favoured me with a Journal of several sheets in his own handwriting, and in the handwriting of young Clanranald, and in the handwriting of MacDonal of Glenaladale, the Journal having been drawn up in the presence, and by the mutual assistance of all the three. By appointment the said Captain Alexander MacDonald returned to me next day about nine o'clock in the morning and stayed with me till near six o'clock at night, in which time I went through the whole Journal with him at great leisure, not only the better to prevent my making any mistakes in transcribing

NO LETTERS RECEIVED THIS ISSUE

Letters are eagerly solicited and will be gratefully received....on any subject.

We reserve the right to make final decisions on publication for reasons of grammar, space, subject matter and legal or other considerations.

GÀIDHLIG/GAELIC PHRASES

Here are a few simple phrases along with an indication of their pronunciation and their English meaning. There are courses and assistance from a myriad of Internet sources in Canada and abroad.

- Dè an t-ainm a tha oirbh? (**Jeh un TAH-num uh HAW-ruv?**)What's your name?

-S mise.....(insert your name). (**SMIH-shuh...**)

-Tha (**HAA**)YES

-Chan eil (**chan AIL**)....NO

One of the best websites: www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/beagairbheag/ has lessons, stories, pronunciations by gaelic speakers and lots more. Check it out.

TARTANS REGISTERED FOR ANY & ALL REASONS

Dr Giles Jackson, an English-born U.S academic with Scottish antecedents and radical sympathies, is making a mark with his *Liberation Kilt Company*. He has registered tartans for a number of protest groups such as the *Occupy movement*.

No doubt this will be controversial in the eyes of traditionalists. They will argue that the registration of the *Scottish Register of Tartans (SRT)*, endorsed by the Scottish Government, was intended to bring order to tradition by regulating existing tartans and approving a limited number of new designs -for football clubs, civic organizations and sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games.

What was not contemplated perhaps was the registering of tartans for supporters of political dissidents, the anti-nuclear lobby or the climate change movement, for example. Should we be concerned?

No, says a writer for *The Scotsman* newspaper in Edinburgh, we should not. By giving official recognition to these plaids, he argues, the SRT is acknowledging the global cultural outreach of Scotland and its iconic tartan tradition. Some may wonder why radical protest groups would want to adopt a uniform and to take the conformist step of applying for official government recognition of what is intended to be a badge of dissent. But "if they are happy to do so, then why not?" says *The Scotsman*.

Just over a week after the *Yes Scotland* campaign was officially launched, at least 4,200 people had volunteered as "Yes Ambassadors", claiming the campaign is "shaping up to be the biggest community-based one in Scottish history".

Meanwhile, a poll commissioned by former Labour Chancellor *Alistair Darling* reportedly found just 33% of people agree that Scotland should become independent, with 57% opposed and 10% undecided.

THE WHITE DOG OF DEATH

Many tales abound in Scottish folklore about premonitions and foretellings of the future, of 'second sight' and various warnings and sightings of ghosts and of symbols advising suitable actions one ought to take -and the dire consequences of ignoring such advice. One of these is the legend of the *White Dog of Death*.

In fact the dog is not necessarily white since its Gaelic name is *Cù glas* -actually 'grey dog'- and comes down to us through the MacDonalds of Morar, that part of the family inhabiting the Morar district of Clanranald lands. The apparition's 'official' name seems to be *Cù glas Mheoble*, the Grey Dog of Morar. Some "White Dog Tales" next issue.

Fàilte Cloinn Raònall

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Fàilte Cloinn Raònall is a quarterly newsletter dedicated to informing, entertaining and connecting the members of macdonald of clanranald and their friends and associates

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Published by
Castle Publishing

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Editor
Dan MacDonald

☆

Copy Editor
N.J. Fry

☆

Layout and design
Dan MacDonald

☆

Printing in-house

☆

Distributed by
Castle Publishing
1033 Hwy 329, RR#2,
Hubbards, Nova Scotia
Canada B0J 1T0
Tel: 902-858-2067
Website: tioramarts.ca

AMANDA'S VIMY PILGRIMAGE

In my life, there have been two specific moments where I felt so truly Canadian I'm sure you could see it on my face. The first: singing the national anthem on Parliament Hill with 100 other people; the second was April 19, 2007.

Standing on the highest point of Vimy Ridge with the memorial towering above you is breathtaking. Everybody asked me how my trip was, and when I got to the part of Vimy Ridge, I was at a loss for words. Every time I looked up, there was the memorial. I was awed by it every single time. There was no way to get used to it.

There were 25,000 Canadians that day, everyone shuffling from activity tent to activity tent, trying to see everything they could. I went straight to the restored trenches, about a 10-minute walk from the memorial. Standing in the trenches, in the exact spot our soldiers fought for our country, was powerful. A friend of mine, when we got back, talked about how he felt being there. He said there were 25,000 people there, but when the war was on, there were even more people in the trenches and in the area. The only difference, they weren't tourists. That put everything into perspective. I thought back to being pushed and shoved in the trenches, walking across the field, and I pictured being there back in 1917. It made me appreciate everything even more.

The ceremony was one of the most powerful things I have experienced. When a participant began to play her violin, everybody was dead quiet, over the entire ridge. It was then that I began to realize just how incredible this ceremony was. We were in a different country, across the ocean, but still a Nation. You could feel the pride everyone had. We came together to commemorate the men who died for us and it was the most wonderful feeling. Every day we go about our lives doing as we please. But if it weren't for those First World War men at Vimy Ridge, we would have a completely different life. I think everyone thought about this at Vimy. They said their thanks they had been meaning to say their entire lives. We made up for all the times we had forgotten to say 'thank you' that day.

Clanranald Connection

Amanda King is the daughter of Brian and Pat King of Peterborough, Ontario.

Pat King is the daughter of Mary (MacDonald) Porter of Pictou, Nova Scotia.

Mary Porter is the daughter of Michael R. MacDonald, who fought at Vimy Ridge and throughout World War I.



DESIGNER WALTER SEYMOUR ALLWARD

-HAS PETERBOROUGH CONNECTION

The memorial at Vimy was designed by Canadian sculptor and architect *Walter Seymour Allward*. Allward also designed the War Memorial in Peterborough. It is literally steps outside the high school attended by Amanda King.

Allward actually began the Peterborough memorial first, suspending work on it to complete the one at Vimy. Construction of the Vimy Memorial commenced in 1925 and took eleven years to complete.

The names of 11,285 Canadian soldiers are inscribed there, the number who were killed in France during that time. The numbers are especially stark when one considers Canada had less than 3 Million citizens at the time. During World War II, over 1 Million Canadians were serving in the Armed Forces out of a population of about 12 million.

As a grade 10 student at PCVS (Peterborough Ontario), I am taking Canadian history. Before I left for the trip, I had just learned about Vimy Ridge and the rest of the First World war. Reading it from a textbook, no matter how good the teacher, is nothing like being there. Seeing the graves of thousands and thousands of soldiers was so emotional. In the textbook, you see the picture. But being where the picture was taken, and seeing it with your own eyes, you see the reality. Nobody speaks at the cemetery. You walk around silently and you try to imagine the families of these men. You think about how they were loved, and how you would feel if you were this soldier's daughter or son, sibling, mother or father.

I spent eight days in Europe. Looking back, the Eiffel tower, the Louvre, Trafalgar Square and Big Ben are there in my mind, but the sea of headstones and the memorial at Vimy ridge are what leave an imprint. I wish that everyone has the opportunity to travel overseas and see what I saw. It changed my life. There is absolutely nothing like it.

SUBMISSIONS

Letters, photos, drawings, articles, etc., may be sent in all the usual ways. We prefer submissions by computer file. Typed submissions may be sent as well, but remember they must be scanned and manipulated into our system. Anything that makes our task simpler is appreciated. No handwritten items unless exceptional circumstances.

Photos and drawings may be sent electronically (jpeg or gif) or by mail. Again, try to make our lives simple as possible; no gigantic files please. Send articles, letters, drawings, etc. by mail or Internet.