



CLAN MACRAE SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

Sgurr Uaran

VOL. 48 ISSUE 3 • OCTOBER 2025



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Passing The Presidential Baton



THIS ISSUE

NOTES & CORRESPONDENCE
A PRESIDENT'S GOODBYE
LETTER FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT
EVENTS, HAPPENINGS & MORE

FEATURE ARTICLES
LADY JANE, RENAISSANCE WOMAN
KYLA COWAN'S JOURNEY
THE BATTLE OF GLEN SHIEL

A PRESIDENT'S GOODBYE

A LETTER FROM BRUCE W. MCRAE

Greetings Fellow MacRaes,

We are having some exciting new changes happening at Clan MacRae. Yes, after 10 exciting and productive years, it is time for me to pass on the reins of the Presidency to another. Your new President is Dean McCraw who Judy and I first met in Scotland in 2000. So, we have known Dean for 25 years and have witnessed his passion and service to Clan MacRae for all those years. Dean has been a Director for several years and will continue to host the Savannah, Charleston, and Hiawassee Highland Games. He will make an excellent President and here's a photo of Dean and I in the tug-o-war at the 2005 Lochcarron Highland Games in Scotland. That's Dean up front with me further behind and Thomas Sloan in the middle. With Clan MacRae, we will always pull to win!



It was in the 90's when Judy and I attended our first Scottish festival in Estes Park, CO. I was looking forward to visiting the Clan MacRae tent, but there was no MacRae tent.

It took a couple of years, but we put together a team of MacRaes to work the festival every year. At that point, I had been researching MacRae genealogy for 20+ years and loved talking to the MacRae visitors about their lineage. I still love it so you'll be happy to know that I am staying on the Board of Directors as our Clan Genealogist!



Then in 1998 Judy and I made our first trip to Scotland, and it was at Eilean Donan Castle we learned of the 2000 Clan MacRae Gathering. We attended the 2000 Gathering and met MacRaes from all over the world. Then in 2005, fate stepped in and we hosted our first Clan MacRae tour of Scotland which was followed up by four more tours over the years. So many MacRaes have a dream to see Scotland and we richly enjoyed making that dream come true for many. Then two dreams came true for me. In 2005, my two brothers were able to join me in Scotland. I had always dreamed of them seeing their ancestral homeland and to walk in the footprints of our ancestors. Then in 2009, Judy and I renewed our wedding vows for our 25th anniversary at Eilean Donan Castle. We are grateful for Clan MacRae for none of this would have happened if we had not decided to join our Society.

Through the years, I was appointed a Commissioner for Colorado, then a Director in 2012. In December 2014 President John MacRae-Hall passed away and at the July 2015 Director's meeting, I was elected President. The first few years were tough for there were critical issues that needed attention. One of the things I am most proud of was the creation of our new website and allowing it to do credit card processing. Even though our Society has flourished in the past 10 years, I cannot take full credit.

Thanks go to all the MacRaes who've contributed to our success during my time as President. There is not space to name them all but just go to the website and look at our Society volunteers. A huge thanks from me goes out to all of them!



But now it is time to let Dean take the reins as President and he will bring innovative ideas. I will continue as the Clan Genealogist to help our membership with their family histories. That's always been my first love within Clan MacRae – meeting our members, developing lifelong relationships and helping with their lineage. Here is a picture of me sitting at my desk and I am ready and willing to help where I can. Just want you to see where I am when we talk on the phone or by email. We truly are the scattered children of Kintail and as we retrieve a part of our history, we are retrieving a part of ourselves.

Sgurr Uran!

Bruce W. McRae

Bruce McRae, Clan MacRae Society
Genealogist
brucewaynemcrae@gmail.com

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings to all the Scattered Kin of Kintail,

I want to introduce myself as the new President of our Clan MacRae Society. Where to start is a big question. My wife, Beverley, passed away from breast cancer at Christmas 2020 after 40 years of marriage. I had a therapist that I saw after this and after getting to know me, she kept telling me that I needed to write a book about my life. I don't intend to do that now, so I'll just hit the tip of the iceberg.

I grew up in the mountains of NC near Hendersonville. In the south end of Henderson County is McCraw mountain, named after one of my ancestors. After attending NC State to earn a degree in forestry, I moved to Savannah, GA to begin my first forestry job. I have spent my entire career working in the forestry field. My major accomplishment was the growing of 505 million tree seedlings that are planted in every Southern state.



My late wife and I raised two daughters and started over by opening our home to 43 foster kids over a 10-year period. I have many stories about the abuse that we saw with these children, but also a few success stories. We removed ourselves when in a moment of insanity, we adopted two special needs boys, one Fragile X Syndrome and the other Autistic.

My life seems to revolve around my Scottish heritage. Some items of note include:

- I have three Clan MacRae kilts all made by my late wife. She made a total of 17 kilts over the years. There is a picture of my family in our 50th anniversary edition wearing some of her kilts.
- My wife and I attended three of the Clan MacRae gatherings in Scotland. At the gathering in 2000, my wife and I won medals at our Games. She received one for crosscut saw and mine was for the tug of war. I mentioned to one of the locals that the games in Scotland were nothing like the games in the US. His response was "That's the problem with you Americans. You try to be too Scottish." He had a point.
- I have been hosting our tent for years at the Savannah and Charleston games. This year I added Hiawassee, GA to the list.
- I have served as both Commissioner and Director for our Clan for many years.
- I have been on the Savannah Games Committee for several years. This year we moved the games to a new site at Bethesda Home for boys. I started in February on site work and have continued through to today. I'm prejudiced but I now believe we have the most beautiful game site in America. Covered in 200-year-old live oaks with a view over the marsh to Moon River (the one from the song), it's a million-dollar view.
- Both of my daughters participated in Scottish dance. They were followed by our two oldest granddaughters.
- The Scottish Dance at the Savannah Scottish Games is sponsored by me in honor of my late wife.
- Per Ancestry DNA, I'm 42% Scottish. Those genes come from MacRae but also Gordon. I'm a member of HOG (House of Gordon).

If you would like to contact me, you can reach me at 912-596-8624 or dean.mccraw1@gmail.com. If you call and I don't answer, please leave a voicemail and I will call you back.

Fortitudine,

Dean McCraw, President
Clan MacRae Society of North America

Member Happenings

Shallowford Trip



Lady Jane MacRae, Larry McRae, Pete Gilyard and Bruce McRae at Shallow Ford Daylily Farm

Patron Dinnner



Attending the Grandfather Mountain Patrons Dinner from bottom left: Judy McRae, Lady Jane MacRae, Denise Ramsbottom, John McGriff, Judi Hajdina, Bruce McRae and Dean McCraw.

Lego Castle



Our member Ian MacRae Nicoll is passionate about creating a Lego Eilean Donan Castle! He's close to the voting stage, so be sure to follow him: <https://www.facebook.com/voteforeileandonan> <https://www.instagram.com/legoeileandonan>

Noteworthy Moments



Joseph and Keith Kerstetter at the Middle TN Games.



Grandfather Mountain Highland Pipe Band serenades Clan MacRae.



John Wayne McRae with saltire flag he purchased that once flew over Eilean Donan.

Send your Member Happenings to Bethany McCoy, bethany.mccoy23@gmail.com.

KAYLEE GAHAGAN- JOINING THE NEWSLETTER TEAM!

Kaylee lives in Atlanta, GA with her husband and dog. She joined Clan Macrae after discovering the society during some ancestral research and has been happily involved ever since. Kaylee has traced her lineage back to the 16th century with plans to go even further. She credits the spark of curiosity to her favorite Macrae: her legendary great-grandmother, Grace, whom she wished she had more time with. Kaylee works in film and media, but in her spare time she enjoys travel, crafting, antiques, and learning new things. She looks forward to getting to know more about other members and hearing their stories!



TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

A LETTER FROM JUDY MCRAE



Yes, as Bruce is stepping down from the Presidency, I am also stepping down from my work with Clan MacRae. I absolutely love our Clan MacRae Society and all the friends we have made, but there are just some other projects the Lord wants me to tackle at this point in my life. Of course, Bruce and I are not saying goodbye to friendships, but I am allowing others to rise up and take on the work that makes our Society great.

You could say my romance with Clan MacRae started with marrying Bruce. It might be a shock to realize I do not have MacRae blood that I know of, but I believe there is a little bit of Scottish in me somewhere because I love it so. After we got married, Bruce would for years tell me that he had a castle in Scotland. Oh really? So, in 1998 we made our first trip to Scotland and were blown away by Eilean Donan Castle. We returned in 2000 for the Intl. Clan MacRae Gathering and the rest is history with Bruce and I hosting five Clan MacRae Tours to Scotland after that.

The greatest challenge with the tours was the 2009 tour with both a Homecoming Gathering for all clans in Edinburgh and then a Clan MacRae Gathering on the following weekend. Since the two gatherings were so historic, we had 84 MacRaes from all over the world on that tour with us. That was also the trip that Bruce and I renewed our wedding vows for our 25th anniversary at Eilean Donan Castle. Just two incredible memories among thousands. There is one aspect of MacRae history that gripped my heart and that is the 1715 Battle of Sheriffmuir. The MacRae warriors at Sheriffmuir were outnumbered and savagely attacked by British dragoons and each time their lines were broken, the MacRaes rallied up to 10 times that day.



This was vicious, savage hand to hand combat that left 58 new widows in Kintail that day. These warriors did not surrender but continued to rally again and again as they fought superior forces unto their very deaths. Let that sink in, fighting unto their deaths.

Some say spending time on your lineage is a waste of time, but they are wrong. The MacRae clan crest conveys fortitude which means “mental and emotional strength in facing difficulty, adversity, danger, or temptation courageously”. In a day and age where loyalty and courage are hard to find, remember Sheriffmuir and the fallen MacRaes. It's in your blood to have fortitude, so rise up MacRaes into the true identity of your warrior blood! Sgurr Uaran! I love you all!



UPCOMING EVENTS

FINAL EVENTS FOR 2025

October 10-12, 2025

Oklahoma Highland Gathering
Choctaw, OK www.unitedscotsok.com/festival/
Contact: Mark McCraw at quickdraw_m@yahoo.com

October 11, 2025

Indianapolis Scottish Highland Games & Festival
Indianapolis, IN www.indyscotgamesandfest.com
Contact: Ray White at channaray@protonmail.com

October 17-19, 2025

Stone Mountain Highland Games
Atlanta, GA www.smhg.org
Contact: Leon Folsom at leon.folsom@prodigy.net

November 1, 2025

Charleston Scottish Games
North Charleston, SC www.charlestonsscottishgames.com
Contact: Dean McCraw at dean.mccraw1@gmail.com

November 7-9, 2025

Salado Scottish Festival
Salado, TX www.saladomuseum.org/scottish-gathering-and-highland-games/
Contact: Ebby Darden at ebbydarden@msn.com

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

February 28, 2026

Northeast Florida Scottish Games
Green Cove Springs, FL www.neflgames.org
Contact: John McRae at jwmc@comcast.net

March 6-8, 2026

North Texas Irish Festival
Dallas, TX www.ntif.org
Contact: Ebby Darden at ebbydarden@msn.com

March 28-29, 2026

San Antonio Highland Games
San Antonio, TX www.sahga.org
Contact: Sarah Ponce at sandjponce@gmail.com

April 18-19, 2026

Loch Norman Highland Games
Huntersville, NC www.lochnorman.com
Contact: Leon Folsom at leon.folsom@prodigy.net

The Scottish festivals listed below will have a Clan MacRae tent hosted by one of our members. For a list of all Scottish festivals, go to www.highlandgamesandfestivals.com/u-s-events/.

If you want to host a Clan MacRae tent at your local festival, please contact Dean at dean.mccraw1@gmail.com.

We'll help you get started!



LADY JANE, A RENAISSANCE WOMAN!

BY JUDY MCRAE



Lady Jane and her piping awards

It's not often you have the privilege of hosting a Renaissance woman, but we did just that this past July. Lady Jane MacRae came from Scotland with her bagpipes to conquer North Carolina and the Grandfather Mountain Games.

And why not? She had already conquered her homeland and beyond.

In May, Pipe Major Lady Jane was chosen to play for King Charles at St Paul's Cathedral and other locations for VE DAY 80 which commemorated the 80th anniversary of the end of WW II. Only a Renaissance woman could play for the King!

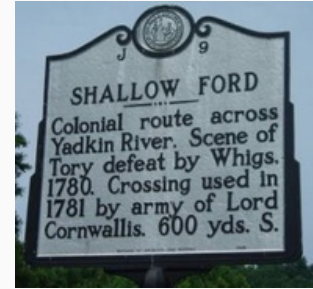
But it's awesome to have a Pipe Major visit, but when you have two, that's a double treat! Accompanying Lady Jane was Pipe Major Denise Ramsbottom from Norwich, England. Denise carried the Lamplight of Peace at the St Paul's Cathedral VE DAY 80 ceremony. Bruce and I met them at Charlotte airport and we were off to conquer!



Denise and the Lamplight Of Peace

Larry and Mary Ruth McRae led us on a day of touring near Winston-Salem, and nothing beats Lexington-style pit-cooked BBQ and a bottle of Cheerwine!

We were fortunate to tour Shallow Ford with Tabatha Gilyard who owns Shallow Ford Daylily Farm. Shallow Ford is a historic shallow Yadkin River crossing point (part of Great Wagon Road) used for centuries by natives and colonists where Patriot forces defeated Tory troops in 1780. A surprise was learning that Tabatha's husband Pete had MacRae lineage!



We report that both Lady Jane and Denise thoroughly enjoyed the Grandfather Games and had not seen anything like it with 100+ clans attending. They both competed, but it was Lady Jane who scooped up the piping awards. She received 1st for the Piobaireachd, 1st for the Strathspey and Reel and 2nd for the 2/4 March. She also won Best Player of her grade. Well done Lady Jane!

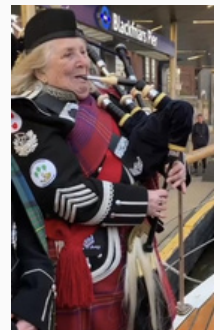


Lady Jane and the Scottish Samurai Award

The awards did not stop there, for once home Lady Jane received the Scottish Samurai Award that signifies excellence of endeavor. Another well done for Lady Jane!

Best of all, this Renaissance woman gifted us with a gorgeous song about the MacRaes and Eilean Donan Castle. Bruce and I both teared up when we first heard it. Just click on the link below and listen. Lyrics are on the next page.

Thank you, thank you, thank you Lady Jane!



Lady Jane on the Havengore

To listen to Lady Jane's song visit: <https://www.macrae.org/clan-history-copy/>

EILEAN DONAN, STRONG AND FAIR

A TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH FOLK BALLAD BY LADY JANE MACRAE

TO LISTEN AS YOU READ ALONG, GO TO:

[HTTPS://WWW.MACRAE.ORG/CLAN-HISTORY-COPY/](https://www.macrae.org/clan-history-copy/)

[Verse 1]

By the shores where three lochs meet,
In Highland breath o' dew and peat,
There stands a castle, lost in time,
Her silence deep, her stance sublime.

[Verse 2]

She's seen the clans rise bold and free,
She's watched the tides o' treachery.
And when the thunder filled the glen,
The MacRaes rose like Highland men.

[Chorus]

O Eilean Donan, strong and fair,
With heather crown and mountain air,
Your soul runs deep in kith and kin—
A castle's heart, a clan within.

[Verse 3]

Though cannon's fire once broke her walls,
And silence filled her shattered halls.
She rose again by loyal hands,
Reborn to watch o'er Highland lands.

[Verse 4]

They say her walls remember well,
The oaths once sworn, the clans that fell.
And in her stones the echoes bide,
Of love that lived and never died.

[Chorus]

O Eilean Donan, strong and fair,
With heather crown and mountain air,
Your soul runs deep in kith and kin—
A castle's heart, a clan within.

[Bridge]

Let time roll on and empires fade,
Still Highland hearts shall not be swayed.
For as long as lochs reflect the sky,
Her spirit shall nae ever die.

[Verse 5]

Now travellers come from far and wide,
To see her by the water's side.
She holds her ground in timeless grace,
Eternal soul o' MacRae's embrace.

[Final Chorus]

Eilean Donan, strong and fair,
Wi' tales that ride the Highland air,
Ye stand where past and present blend—
A flame o' clan that will nae end.

© 2025 Lady Jane MacRae

HIGHLAND PRIDE ON A NATIONAL STAGE: KYLA COWAN'S JOURNEY

SUBMITTED BY: KRIS WIESE - GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER OF LILLIAN MAE MCRAE,
DESCENDANT OF HUGH BAIN MCRAE, INVERNESS



Kyla Cowan with her awards

For the Cowan family, Scottish Highland dance is more than a sport or an art—it's a legacy. Through their heritage and deep-rooted traditions, Sandy Cowan and her daughters Kyla and younger sister Maysen are carrying the proud banner of Clan MacRae, one dance step at a time.

Sandy, whose father played the bagpipes and instilled a love of Celtic music in the family, reflects on how her Scottish roots have shaped her daughters' journey.

"Being involved in the Scottish community, both my girls have gained a knowledge of their grandfather and his love for Celtic music," Sandy says. "Their involvement in Highland dance has supported their growth—not just as dancers, but as young women with a deep appreciation for friendship, pride, and family. It has grounded them to be better people."

That grounding has led Kyla, the elder daughter, to remarkable heights this year. After months of rigorous training, she qualified to compete at the ScotDance USA National Championship—known as USIR (United States Inter-Regional Championship). Representing the Southeast region and Clan MacRae, Kyla took the stage with pride, grit, and grace.

"This was my first time qualifying, and it felt like living a dream that little me always wished for," Kyla shares. "When I was younger, I watched the older dancers at USIR and hoped I'd be one of them someday. Getting to compete this year—and hearing my name called for awards—was so exciting."

Kyla placed 6th in the Fling, 8th in the Sword, 7th in the Sean Trews, and 5th in the Reel. But beyond the rankings, it was the personal growth that mattered most.

"One of the best parts was seeing how far I could really push myself," she says. "Even when things hurt, I felt empowered knowing I gave it my all. And I got to reconnect with old friends and meet amazing new dancers, too."

Behind the scenes, the journey to Nationals required immense dedication. The dance season never truly ends.

Beginning in September, Kyla trained through regional competitions including Charleston, Stone Mountain, Savannah, Dunedin, and Loch Norman. All while attending twice-weekly dance classes and ramping up to daily practices leading up to USIR.

For Sandy, watching Kyla dance is a deeply emotional experience.

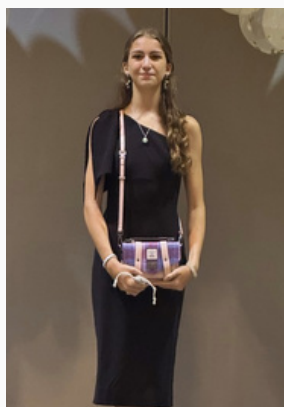
"I enjoy seeing her blossom and speak passionately about why she dances. Her closeness to her grandfather shows. My father was a proud MacRae and a talented piper. I know he's looking down with pride. Though Kyla's last name is Cowan, it's the MacRae spirit that drives her."



Kyla Cowan, center

HIGHLAND PRIDE ON A NATIONAL STAGE: KYLA COWAN'S JOURNEY

...continued



Kyla Cowan

That spirit is also alive at the Scottish School of Arts at Grandfather Mountain, where Kyla earned a Clan MacRae dance scholarship last year. The weeklong camp is a haven of Highland culture—held fittingly at Lee's MacRae College.

"It's one of my favorite places," Kyla says.



Kyla Cowan, center

"We learn dance, history, and about our clans. Last year, our teacher was Steven MacRae, which made it even more special. And to know my grandfather once attended that same camp when it included bagpipes and drums—it really connects our family across generations."

Maysen is already following in her footsteps.

"My favorite part is getting to perform on stage—and sometimes even next to my sister," she says. "My best time ever was in Scotland. I want to go to Nationals someday, just like Kyla."

Sandy beams when she sees her daughters dance side by side. "I hope they continue to find joy in this tradition and cherish the friendships they build. To this day, I still have deep friendships with dancers I grew up with. Now, our children are forming those same bonds."

Highland dance, the family emphasizes, is more than kilts and choreographed steps. It's demanding and athletic—requiring strength, stamina, and mental grit. But the rewards? Lifelong friendships, a deep connection to culture, and unforgettable memories.

"If someone is thinking of trying Scottish dance, they should expect hard work and sore muscles—but also an incredible sense of accomplishment," Sandy says. "Through it, we've made friends all over the world and walked in the footsteps of our ancestors."

As for Kyla's future, her goals are clear: keep improving, qualify for more USIR competitions, and one day, become a national champion. "I'm motivated by the chance to grow," she says. "And by my family—especially my grandfather. He might not be here physically, but I know he's watching. Every time I dance, I feel connected to him and to my heritage."



Kyla Cowan receiving honors

And her favorite dance?

"The Sword- it is so unique and challenging, and Blue Bonnets- just beautiful and fun to perform."

For the Cowan family, every dance is a tribute—to history, to community, and to the love that lives on through generations.

Watch Kyla dance [here!](#)

THE BATTLE OF GLEN SHIEL

A BACKDROP TO THE JACOBITE UPRISING 1719 FROM A HIGHLAND PERSPECTIVE

BY THE LATE ALEXANDER MACKAY, A ONE-TIME CASTLE GUIDE AT EILEAN DONAN

In the first quarter of the 18th century George 1st (Georg Ludwig of Hanover) had a shaky grasp of the British throne. The English parliament had made him King even though he was 57th in line to the throne! Scotland's opinion was deliberately and arrogantly ignored, and Scotland was now being viewed as a minor provincial irritant, populated by those too ignorant to realize they had been assimilated and "civilized"!

George was a monarchical puppet, a convenience and tool of the state, the only purpose he had on the throne was to do as he was told. Parliament had a taste of running the country for itself under Cromwell's brutal fundamentalist state and the new generation of nouveau riche fat cat moguls of British statesmanship and the Highland Nabob relished their newfound power and certainly did not want the House of Stewart back on the throne with their liberal attitude to religion and particularly Catholicism. The Government had worked hard at controlling religious propaganda using it as their principal method of state management and control. Controlling religion made men rich! The Government knew it would not be able to control the House of Stewart. Therefore, George would be presented to the people as a good Protestant with a drip of Royal Stewart blood in his German veins (his grandmother was Elizabeth Stewart a daughter of King James and sister to Charles the 1st). This unlikely German would spawn the new British dynasty ... but not without a fight!

Across the border unrest festered. The seething Clans knew their way of life was being eroded and worse, persecuted into extinction by civil Clan warfare gleefully engaged upon by the avaricious Campbells and their ilk and all being financed and encouraged by the English.

By this time England had learned from bitter experience the old Roman Machiavellian axiom "to defeat a strong people, set brother against brother" and stay out the fight yourself!



The Battle of Glen Shiel 1719, by Peter Tillemans

For the Highlanders there could be only one response, war.

James Francis Edward Stewart son of King James Stewart of Great Britain was the direct bloodline heir to the throne. He was the son of the King and there was no way to alter this biological fact. English had overthrown James in a kind of Coup d'etat, but he wasn't dead, and his heir and son was born in 1699.

The government tried desperate measures to eradicate the divine right of Kings to rule including the "Act of Settlement" a piece of anti-Catholic legislation from the hand of Dutchman and bigoted scottophobe, William of Orange, intended not as a defense of religious doctrine but simply a political tool to prevent the Stewarts regaining the throne. They wanted to secretly choose a monarch and keep this secret from the gullible people... or so they thought.

Scotland was having none of "Yon wee German Lairdy". It was only too obvious that the Government was choosing the monarch for its own political ends. And for a great many, this was the end of the monarchy and the beginning of corruption. God chose monarchs for good or ill, not man. The people were perhaps not so gullible as Government would contemptuously believe, and in the Highlands the Stewarts were seen as the true Kings and potential saviors of the Clan culture which had been their progenitor. With 1000 years of Clan history trickling through their fingers, it was fight or continue to suffer and die. They chose to fight, the followers of James, the "Jacobites".

THE BATTLE OF GLEN SHIEL ... continued

In 1715 James attempted to regain the crown. He had European support in abundance after all everyone hated the English! But he lacked the killer instinct. To many he was "Old Mr. Melancholy" If only he had had half the panache and drive of his yet to be born son. Despite James' European support and really having it there for the taking he let himself down and the Loyal Highlanders.

Still smarting from the indecisive and unsatisfactory conclusion of 1715 which had fizzled out, the Clan chiefs still had momentum on their side. They had proved the Clans were still a dangerous and potent force to be reckoned with and before they were spent, they would be at the throats of Government again despite a lackluster King. Many a council echoed through the great halls of the monolithic dark fortresses of the west highlands as Clan chiefs spent the long winter of 1718 plotting the downfall of "The Rump" the usurper George 1st.

It is the year 1719 England and Spain are at War. They were the Global Superpowers of their day. Today just third-rate tourist economies, but back then Big players. They pirated each other in their greed for the new world of the Americas. And Spain would see an ally in the north. Spain viewed the Highlanders as a potential thorn in the rump of the English. What's more many agents of the exiled King and Highland chiefs were diligently at work in Europe soliciting the cause of the House of Stewart to anyone who would hear Scotland's desperate plea.

The King of Spain's Chief Minister Cardinal Alberoni convinced King Philip that Scotland might prove useful against the English. So convinced, Philip of Spain agreed to finance an expedition to Britain in support of the House of Stewart.

An armada with men, weapons, gunpowder, and provisions enough for an army 10,000 strong set sail from the Iberian Peninsula bound for Scotland. The same Spain that had helped England destroy the Darien Scheme and bring about the financial disaster that forced the union on Scotland was now coming to its aid!

Disaster! A terrible weeklong storm smites the fleet whilst in the notorious waters of the Bay of Biscay. All is lost and the pitiful remnants limp back to Vigo and Cadiz.



Alexander MacKay loading up at Glen Shiel

Two Spanish ships, through great feat of seamanship and navigation circumnavigate the British Isles to arrive on the West Coast of Scotland a land none has seen before.

Meanwhile the Marquis of Tullibardine, the Earl of Seaforth, and Earl Marischal are rallying the Clans on the West Highlands with promise of Spanish support and the new Spanish long guns. Gunpowder modern warfare! Just what the Clans were desperate for, the new weapons that the English embargo prevented from getting into Scotland and with good reason! Ironically, the Highlanders correctly foresaw the way of modern warfare in the firearm, yet it was the Claidheamh-mor which had begun to feel obsolete, which was providing them with all their victories.

Despite the reticence of some Clans, many were lackluster after the outcome of the '15 and many more thought they were hearing false promises yet again, an exasperated Tullibardine managed to mass enough for an army at Kintail to await the Spanish.

England was not oblivious to this uprising. Their Spies had been reporting on the events since Spain decided to get involved. However, England had troubles of its own not least war with Spain and Europe. And worse war with itself for their greed had finally got the better of them and London, birthplace of modern share trading was about to be rocked to its core by the great stock market crash known as the "South Sea Bubble" later that same year.

It was against this backdrop the ordinary Highlander found himself. Not a puppet or pawn in someone else's game as is oft suggested but an independent spirit resenting government from dandified anglophile Edinburgh popinjays and detesting government from corrupt London bankers. Any cause which could prevent the corrosive influence of the English was seized upon.

Those Chiefs that witnessed the arrival of the Spanish ships must have been shocked and dismayed to see only two ships arrive at Eilean Donan Castle in the early part of that year.



Glen Shiel

THE BATTLE OF GLEN SHIEL ... continued

Their misery was further compounded by the pitiful sight of desperately sick Spanish soldiers disembarking at Eilean Donan. The Castle became a triage not a focus for an uprising.

It was too little too late. The English were coming. General Wightman marched west from Inverness and the Flamborough, Worcester, and Enterprize sailed into Kyle Rhea... objective Eilean Donan.

On the 10th of May 1719, the English warships began a bombardment of the mediaeval fortress. The plucky Spanish had made the best of a bad lot and reformed the old castle as best possible.

They put up a fight with small arms. But it was a lost cause they were facing top of the line warships, and the 13th century castle was never designed to sustain such a bombardment. They surrendered the castle to Captain Herdman of the Enterprize who torched the Spanish gunpowder and leveled the ancient keep. Captain Boyle of the Worcester smugly and arrogantly was able to claim he had removed one less hiding place for the enemies of the king.

The three ships sailed up Loch Duich triumphantly shelling anything that took their fancy. All the MacRaes captured at Eilean Donan were tortured and those that survived were hanged onboard the Enterprize.



2005 Clan MacRae tour at Glen Shiel

Whilst the Jacobites held out in Kintail, the Spanish fleet under Don Balthazar, DeGuevara was wiped out crossing the Bay of Biscay by a dreadful storm. With the loss of their allies, it was only a matter of time before the English turned their wrath on the Highlanders.

A month to the day Tullibardine, Seaforth, and Marischal's force of Jacobite Highlanders and Whitecoat Spanish hemmed in inland at Kintail away from the harrying Warships prepared to face the Redcoats which were beginning to enter the pass of Glenshiel.

The Redcoats outnumbered the Jacobites who, despite their superior position were also outgunned. Highlanders never enjoyed any great successes against the Redcoats with this kind of long-range sniping skirmish and after a few hours of taking pot shots at each other the Jacobites called it a day and headed for the mountain tops. The Spanish had the great luxury of being considered Prisoners of War and were afforded every courtesy by the Redcoats. Highlander prisoners would have been executed on the spot as traitors to the "Rump King." That is why the Spanish asked Tullibardine if they could surrender.

They say no broadsword was ever drawn and the Highlander could not exploit his most deadly and devastating tactic hand-to-hand combat, for which he had no equal. So ended the '19.

The following year a child was born who did what his father could not. That child was Charles Edward Stewart and without European support and arriving in Scotland with only six men he came within days of regaining his grandfather's crown. But that's another story.

COMIC CORNER

